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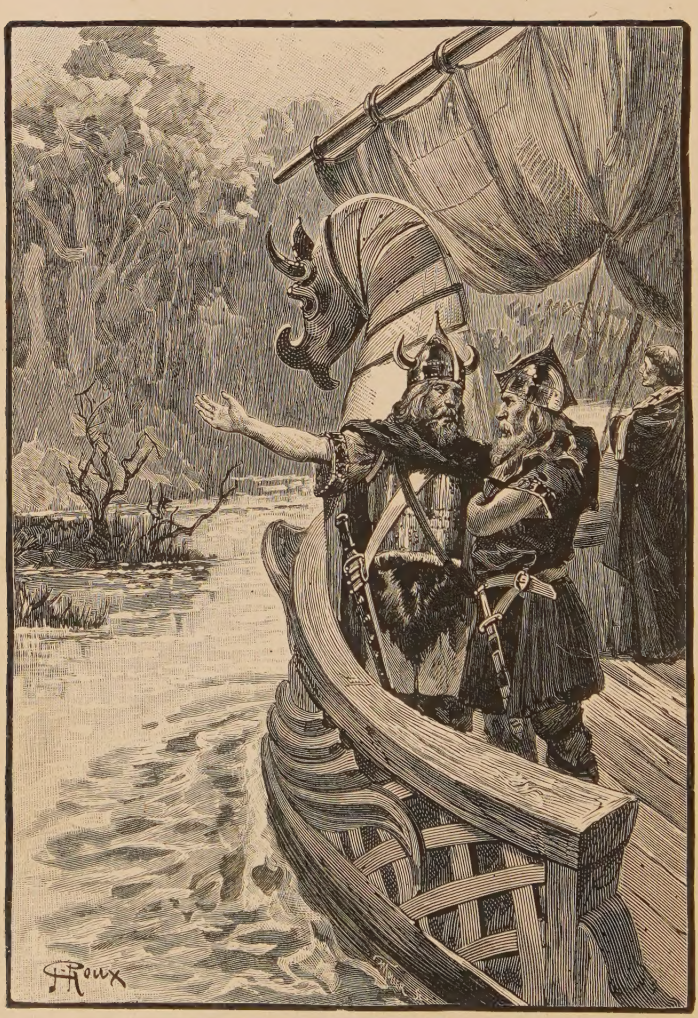

"'IS THIS THE SAME LAND THAT YOU FORMERLY BEHELD?'"

THE
RULERS OF THE SEA

THE NORSEMEN IN AMERICA FROM THE TENTH
TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

970
58

ILLUSTRATED BY
G. ROUX AND L. BENETT

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A SHORT HISTORY OF THIS BOOK.

Last spring, just as the blossoms on the apple trees in the orchard were shedding perfume over the re-born earth, I was preparing to leave Rouen, where I had been working in the library for two months. That Rouen library is an inexhaustible mine, certainly the richest and the best arranged in provincial France. Half a million volumes and manuscripts always at the disposal of the public! Rare missals profusely illuminated! A superb collection of medals! And the library is open all the year round, from ten o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night, with an Edison lamp on every table, and easy chairs that might startle Voltaire's ghost. And all this in a vast hall with two galleries lighted by a glass roof and garnished from ceiling to floor with that bewildering array of books, old and new, which is so dear to the lovers of

reading. But what is the good of it all when the apple-blossoms are out?

Well, then, before starting for the country, I went to make my farewell visit to M. Noël, the librarian, one of the most popular and sympathetic men in Rouen. Every hour I passed in his company was literally filled with anecdotes and reminiscences. On this particular day, I found M. Noël in great trim. We talked about everything, and especially of Normandy. The Norman navigators were particularly interesting to me, and, as I was expressing my admiration of those true sons of the sea-kings who were, as I observed, among the first to reach Senegal, the Guinea coast,—

"Say *the* first," said M. Noël, eagerly. "They forestalled the Portuguese and the Spaniards on the coast of Africa, they doubled the Cape of Good Hope long before Vasco da Gama. You have said well; they are indeed true sons of those who discovered America several centuries before Christopher Columbus."

"Ah, yes! The Whalers, at Newfoundland?"

"I don't mean them, for they cannot have landed on the American shore, but the explorers who visited the country now known as Massachusetts, Virginia, and Florida, established themselves there, colonised it, and held it for four centuries."

I heard but did not understand him. M. Noël resumed:

"Yes, I repeat it. The Norsemen of the past had flourishing colonies in America. You are astonished, and I understand why. Of course, they did not call their territory America, seeing that Vespucius, whose baptismal name was Americus, did not come there until five hundred years later. But they had given their transatlantic settlements the name of Vinland, 'the good land of wine,' on account of the grapes which it produced."

My surprise increased as he went on speaking.

"Nor is this all. They established, in Vinland, the amazing civilisation that they carried with them everywhere. They had cities, kings, and bishops in America, they paid tithes and Peter's Pence. But, if you desire to be more particularly informed on this matter, go to M.

Gabriel Gravier, the President of our Geographical Society,—it is a specialty of his. He is as obliging and as simple as he is learned; he will give you a cordial reception, and your time will not be wasted in his company."

I acted on the librarian's advice at once, and presented myself to M. Gabriel Gravier. His abode was the typical home of a scholar. Books everywhere, on the walls, on the floor heaped up in the easy chairs, and sliding off the ordinary ones. On the table a mountain of folios and yellow bundles of papers which preserved their equilibrium only by a continuous miracle. And, like the set scene in "Faust," a corner of the cathedral visible from the window through a blue cloud proceeding from a pipe which was always lighted.

M. Gabriel Gravier is a Norman by adoption. His employment in the administration brought him forty years ago to Rouen, and he, like all lovers of beautiful things, was fascinated by the famous Norman capital. Very soon the stones of the great churches and those of the old houses which are its pride gave up their secrets to him; the Seine and its ships laden with cotton, spices, and foreign

timber revived, in his fancy, the grandeur of the ancient Rouen fleet, the great rival of the fleets of Dieppe and Honfleur. Then came the library, hitherto unexplored, with its dusty bales of uncared-for curiosities. The distant and fantastic expeditions of the navigators, and their marvellous discoveries, inspired the privileged explorer of this mine of wealth with eager and intense interest. He described to me his emotion when, on opening a little red-backed volume, he found it was *The Voyage of Jacques Cartier*, first edition, printed in 1545, and of which, up to that time, only one copy was known to exist, namely, the one preserved in London. And yet, Jacques Cartier is not the man for M. Gravier. He came from St. Malo, and was, therefore, disqualified for a place in the Norman Pantheon. It will be objected to this exclusion, that St. Malo, the first Breton city, is very near Pontorson, the first Norman port; but a narrow watercourse, the Conessan, divides them, and that mere rivulet is a world's width between Normandy and Brittany — above all between Normans and Bretons. And M. Gravier admits Normans only.

"What seamen in the world," said he, "can present such a Golden Book? Jehan de Béthencourt, King of the Canaries; D'Esnambuc, Viceroy of the Antilles; Aubert, who went to the St. Lawrence long before Cartier; Parmentier; Lelièvre; Jean Ribaut, Viceroy of Florida; Gouneville, and so many others; then the greatest of all, Cavelier de La Salle, who, being of the same race as the discoverers of America, gave half of the New World to France."

"We were in America, and we stayed there. Then it was true? They really did discover America?"

"Can you doubt it?"

With this, M. Gravier rose and collected together from left and right, from high and low, a mass of books, packages of manuscripts, and copy-books of scholastic aspect.

"These," said he, showing me some venerable folios, "are the *Sagas*, the chronicles of the monks of Iceland,* relating, in their order, the facts which make up the transatlantic Odyssey of the Scandinavians. The *Sagas* are in

* The origin of the name, Iceland, is *Ceile de*, — Servant of God. — TRANSLATOR.

the Norse language, with a Latin translation on the opposite pages, carefully verified by collation with the originals, which are preserved at Copenhagen. This is the true history, the pure history of the discovery and colonisation of America by the Norsemen. Then, here are the ancient Norwegian writers, Thormodos Thorfaus, Snorle Sturlesons, Anderson, and several others. Rafu comes later with his *American Antiquities* crammed with proofs. His book is in Latin, which indicates its venerable age. The same is to be said of this *Reeneil des faits accomplis par les vieux Boréalieus*, of *Particularités du Groenland*, of this *Histoire du Vinland*. You understand Latin? and English? Well, here are Wheaton, Kohl, Reamish, De Costa, and more recently, Eben Horton Horsford, and his daughter, Miss Cornelia Horsford, whose archæological discoveries establish the settlement of the Norsemen in America. The Germans, too, beginning with Humboldt, have treated this subject. The Italian Ramusio is full of revelations, as well as Zeno, with respect to a particular episode in which he was one of the chief actors. Lastly, do not fail to consult

Père Le Clerq and some other missionaries who found indisputable remains of a former Christian civilisation in several places in America."

I was overwhelmed by all these documents and proofs, but I ventured to ask how it was that these facts were so little known among us.

"Ah!" replied M. Gravier, "but they are no better known abroad. I have been quoting the *savants* to you, and the *savants* are very rarely read. Nevertheless, several of our well known writers speak of the Norsemen in America; for instance, Depping, Eugène Bauvois, Estancelin, Gaffarel, and Margry. Twenty years ago, I myself published a book on this subject, in which I endeavoured to lay down the exact truth as I had made it out from the old texts, and these did not always agree. It might serve you as a guide, perhaps, if you take up the matter. Unfortunately, I possess only one copy, but you will find the book in the library. In the meantime, take this pile home with you. When you have done with it, bring it back and I will give you another."

I carried away the pile, returned for a second, and then for a third. The researches that were made easy for me by the great work and the invaluable advice of the President of the Norman Geographical Society became a passion with me. The spring advanced, the summer passed, then came the autumn. After the Norsemen came the Normans, and, when I had to re-tread the road to Paris, the fields had already lost their golden garniture, and the newly stripped apple-trees wore mourning for the fruit which had long since taken the place of the pink blossom.

EDMOND NEUKOMM.

Part I.

CHAPTER I.

HERWOLF, THE LAST OF THE SEA-KINGS.

In the year 985, Herwolf the Jarl, that old northern pirate whose ship had "furrowed the sea-gull's realm" for half a century, sowing terror everywhere

and leaving spoil for sharks in its track, was taking his rest by his fireside, bending under the weight of years, bearing the scars of many wounds, cursing the fate that had torn his blood-stained sword from his hand.

He was still king, but in name only; at his age fighting time was passed; and this was his trouble, for none but warriors who fall by the sword, and those who are heroes of great adventures, may take their seats at the banquet of the gods.

Now it came to pass that in this year 985, Hakon the Bad, King of Norway, resolved he would be the only king in his kingdom, and with this intent he ordered all those who bore the title of king to lay it down, come without delay to his Court, and do homage to him. There were some who obeyed, but the greater number resisted, so that in a very short time vessels great and small, from the *drakar* propelled by thirty-two pairs of oars, to the humble wicker-work *carabos*, issued from every port and every fjord, and breasted the foaming sea, all fleeing in exasperation from disgrace and subjection. Both old and young then took to the sea again, with no thought of returning. At the first call to action Herwolf's blood rushed to his heart, his limbs regained their strength, and, although his son Bjorn was absent on a distant expedition, he resolved to set out immediately. According to custom he em-

THE SHIPS FLYING FROM THE DECREE OF HAKON.

barked the sacred pillars of his house, to be thrown into the sea when the vessel should be nearing shore, and vowed to make his new home in whatsoever country he might be borne to by the waves.

Then the old Jarl hoisted the sail behind the green dragon that gripped the keel of his ship with its legs and wings, and, without turning his head for a farewell look, he sailed for Iceland, his chosen refuge.

"There," he had heard Thorolf, the tale-teller, declare, "you will find a land of sunshine, flowery and fertile, where the plants drop butter; the sky is always blue; there is no frost or snow in winter; the hills are clothed with leafy trees, and the waters peopled by salmon and whales."

Trusting in these fair promises, the old outlaw was sailing over a calm sea towards this benign clime, when there arose in the latitudes where he expected to find it a sudden tempest which disabled the gallant old *drakar* of adventurous fame, and flung it on the coast, where it broke up.

Then indeed did Herwolf, alone upon a rock, stretching out his arms towards the fragments of his ship, and the floating corpses of his late companions, now ghastly playthings of the waves, realise that everything was lost to him. He, who never before had shed tears, wept; hot drops moistened his long, white moustache, and looking upward for the last

time at the sky — made of the skull of Ymer — he cried:

"The old warrior is going to die, but he has no arms, and his blood does not flow from any wound. Farewell, ye companions of the glorious days, you are happier than I. To you Valhalla is open and the Valkyrie have borne your gasping bodies to the banquet board of Odin. There, until final chaos, until the day when the last man shall perish by the hand of his fellow, whom he shall kill at the same moment, you will drink the delicious hydromel from flagons filled by nymphs, and feast on the flesh of the wild hog, which is cut up every morning and reborn entire every evening. You will leave the board only for the lists where wounds leave no scars. But I shall not see the palace in the clouds, shining with light. Heimdrol, the warden, whose ear is so keen that he hears the wool growing on the sheep's back, will not catch the sound of my footsteps; the sacred bridge of Bafrost will not be lowered to give passage to the victor in so many fights. Of Hela only shall I be the guest; Hèla, who presides at the refuge of those to whom death comes without glory; Hela, whose palace is pain, and whose table is famine."

The old man had spoken, and already his brow was bent towards the depth beneath him when a strong hand was laid upon his shoulder. He turned,

beheld a warrior white-haired like himself, and demanded:

"Who are you?"

"I am Erik the Red, once a pirate, now a free man. Like you, I had learned from my childhood to redden a lance; the sword was familiar to my hand before I had seen twenty winters. Then, always there was fighting by sea and land. The deck of my ship was empurpled as though with rich wine poured out by young maidens; the sea was as red as a gaping wound; and when we returned from an expedition we had raised the coast-levels and appeased the hunger of the vultures with corpses. But, one day, all this glory had to be given up. Age came to me, just as it came to you, and at the same time; my ship was dashed to pieces on this coast as yours has been; but I am less fortunate than you, I may not remain here. This land is fair, free, hospitable; nevertheless it has its laws, and I have been so imprudent as to infringe them."

"Explain yourself, friend," said Herwolf.

"I provoked a coward, a felon, and I killed him. I have not laid hands on anything that belonged to him, neither his horse, nor his helmet, nor his money. I laid the body of my victim on his shield, the head turned to the East, with his lance planted in the ground, his arms grouped about him, and his horse tethered hard by. Then I went to the nearest vil-

lage and told the first man I met the thing that had occurred. Such is the law of Iceland. My fate was from that moment in the hands of my adversary's kinsmen. They might have been satisfied with a ransom, an expiation in one form or another; they have exacted my banishment. I am going away. I must leave my hearth fire forever, the place where I have lived since I grew old with my wife, Thorhilda, my three sons, Thornstein, Leif and Thorwald, not yet come to man's estate, and my daughter, Freydize, whose indomitable nature proclaims her race, and does it honour."

"Alas! there is no more a rooftree and a hearth fire for me," said the old sea-king; "the roof posts of my dwelling are floating away even to the immensity of waters; nothing remains for me but to die."

"No, my king, you shall not die," cried Erik. "You shall be my guest; we will warm our stiff old limbs at the same fire, and we will merit the fate of the brave by enriching our country with a new territory. I know to the westward a land that is always green; it is Greenland. In the time of my great pirate voyages I made an incursion there, and I want to return. I have communicated my plan to several of my associates, and thirty-five ships await only my signal to set sail. Come with us."

After a thoughtful pause the old man said, slowly:

"I cannot. In springtime every year my son Bjorn comes back to the old house, and finding it empty he must know where my blessing is awaiting him."

"By the first ship sailing for our country those who have remained there shall learn the place of your refuge," answered the Icelander.

At these words Herwolf cast a long last look upon the immense sheet of water, now calm, limpid and sunny, that like a golden veil covered those who slept forever in its depths. Then he placed his right hand in Erik's.

"My kingdom is no more," he said. "The day of heroic adventure is past. Yes, I will be your companion, your guest, your brother. Let us embark at once! Let us flee from this accursed coast where all that remained of my glory has gone down before my eyes! Let even the memory of my exploits perish! Now I shall brave death with a smile."

That same day, the thirty-five barks set sail. Only fourteen reached Greenland with Erik the Red. The others were driven apart by storms, flung upon reefs, rent and devastated by cyclones, and became the prey of the waves. Among the lost ships was that which bore Herwolf and his fallen fortunes. It was written in the Book of Destiny that the last sea-king should perish on the sea.

CHAPTER II.

BJORN HERWOLFSON ACCIDENTALLY DISCOVERS A CONTINENT BEYOND THE SEAS. — HE DOES NOT LAND UPON IT. — THE OLD PIRATE, ERIK THE RED, REPROACHES HIM SEVERELY.

When Bjorn Herwolfson returned to Norway, according to his custom, in the spring of 986, and found the house of his ancestors dismantled, he was profoundly grieved.

Some said that his father had set out for Iceland; but a sailor who had returned from that country informed him that Herwolf had sailed for Greenland with Erik the Red.

Bjorn was reminded by the description of this continent, unknown to him, of the white peaks that had been discovered a hundred years earlier by Gunnbjorn the Corsair. And Thorolf, the tale-teller, who had a thousand strings to his bow, and wanted to secure a subject of noble race for the King of Norway, assured him, in order to keep him, that Hollur Geit, the Jarl, claimed to have reached that land by crossing the ice with a goat, and also

asserted that he had seen oaks laden with acorns as big as men, also giants, and icebergs which crushed ships in their passage. The sea, he added, was covered with floes, and the land, which was ravaged by internal fire, though covered in parts by eternal snow, spouted streams of boiling water into the air, and was ceaselessly racked by terrible convulsions.

These warnings were powerless to frighten the son of the old sea-king. In his haste, he did not even pause to unload his ship. As, however, he had charge of their souls, he mustered his seamen, and said to them:

"My men, I am about to set out on an expedition in which there will be neither fighting nor booty. Filial piety alone directs my course to an unknown land. My sword will remain in its scabbard, and, during long days and long nights, you will have nothing to amuse you but waves following waves, and the horse of Night, he with the frosted mane, yielding the place to the chariot of Day, with its sparkling wheels that illumine the skies. I tell you the truth, my men, this voyage is rash, for not one of us has seen the Greenland Ocean."

These words, far from discouraging the men, aroused the thirst for adventure which instinctively seizes the seaman of the North by the throat. They all cried out together:

"We will follow you, Bjorn. Where you command us to go we will go; the star you choose shall be our guide; the land you lead us to shall become our country."

The great expanse of the summer sea lay stretched before the brave men; the hot sun gilded the crests of the rocks, and flung a fiery glow upon the waves. It seemed as though the whole world must bask in the ineffable delight of those balmy and benignant days. But mariners do not allow themselves to be beguiled by such splendour; they know that in Hyperborean regions this same sun covers the waves which do not break on any shore with dense fogs, making thick darkness around the ship. The crew of Bjorn Herwolfson's vessels had often encountered such fogs, and knew that they might last for two or three days, perhaps even longer. A story was told of an old fisherman, who went every year to cast his nets in the Gunnbjorn latitudes, and, having got into a fog of the sort, did not get out of it until all his provisions were exhausted — he had taken enough for a week!

Neither obstacles nor perils could, however, deter Herwolfson's crew, and they set sail without an hour's delay.

For three days the wind was favourable. The *Sneggar*, shaped like a snail, was speeding so rapidly over the waves in a northwesterly course that

the mariners could not fail soon to sight the promised land, when, suddenly, a night fell which did not end in the sweet light of dawn. The hours wore on, dark and dreary; the atmosphere was laden with a thick, hot, sickening vapour. A strong current drew the ship as a loadstone draws iron. Then the bravest gravely asked of their own souls whether they were not sailing to the dark realm of Hela. But tempests came from time to time to recall them to the reality. The lightning, rending the mist, lighted up the raging sea; the sails, the ropes, creaked and whistled; the vessel, straining from bow to stern, at every moment seemed about to founder. Then a calm, more dismal than the commotion, would set in again.

The sand-glass marked hour after hour, and the hours succeeded each other like a chain of terror; and still the darkness brooded over the deep. At last, after a terrific storm, in which the lightning had left a phosphorescent penumbra after it, the colours of the rainbow shone out through the mist, pale at first, then more distinct, and lastly brilliant.

At sight of this, Bjorn and his crew went down on their knees, for the rainbow is the bridge of Bafrost. And there arose, in truth, in the beneficent cloud a golden palace, the most beautiful, the most resplendent of all, that of the Day Star, which darted its rays upon the bold mariners, whose eyes could

hardly distinguish the watery plain from the cloudless sky, so dim were they after the prolonged darkness. It seemed to them, however, that a bar of blue, different from that which marked out the horizon, was taking a body, and even assuming distinct forms. Their surprise was great, and when their sight could bear the light of day all doubt was dispelled. There lay before them — land.

Already strange birds, whose like they never had seen, were flying around their sails, and the fishes that played just beneath the surface of the sea in no wise resembled the salmon and the whales of the northern coasts. And the seaweed floating upon the waves wore a more tender green than the seawrack of the fjords.

The heights, too, were clothed in tints unknown in the northern regions; no glacier crowned them, and, when the evening came, unlike the cliffs of cold countries, they donned neither rose colour nor violet. Rich verdure covered these slopes with golden patches that glistened in the last rays of the sun. Then came another surprise, — the night fell almost suddenly.

Then Bjorn thought:

"We are out of our course. This land is not the country we are seeking."

And, as he could now read the signs of the heavenly plains, he ordered the ship to be put about and

steered by the polar star. Two days afterwards, however, his ship's passage was again barred by land; he approached the coast, and perceived that it was covered with forests like the first.

He stamped his foot in angry impatience, and cried:

"We are out of the right way; the land whither we are going bears neither trees nor tall grass, notwithstanding its name."

The sailors wanted to land in order to obtain a supply of water, but he forbade this.

"We can do very well without it," he said, roughly. "I am in haste to see my father again, and this southwest wind will bring us to him quickly."

The *Sneggar* returned to the high seas. The mist had completely disappeared, and the sails swelled out under the breeze. Each day brought a shorter night, soon the horizon was always luminous, even during the hours of sleep. Then the son of Herwolf knew that he was approaching Borean latitudes, and, leaving it to destiny to guide him, he released three ravens which had been brought for this purpose on the ship, and let them fly. The birds whirled about the tall mast for some time; then one flew far out to sea; the second, having fluttered about here and there for a long time, returned to the ship; lastly, the third, after some hesitation, flew away in the direction foreseen by the skilful pilot. The same

day the mariners sighted land — steep hills under a red sky.

"Thanks be to the gods, we have arrived," said Bjorn, the son of Herwolf. And, in truth, this was Greenland.

But at what place, in what fjord, was the companion of Erik the Red to be found? Bjorn visited several gulfs and penetrated far inland; he discovered no trace of a Norseland colony. The season was passing rapidly, and the son of Herwolf was already anxiously considering whether he might not be obliged to winter in these desolate latitudes, when, from precise information received, he had the good fortune to arrive at that part of the coast which was inhabited by the Norsemen. On being apprised of the death of his father, Bjorn was heartbroken. Under the weight of overwhelming grief, he lifted his hands towards the heavens, accusing the gods of having mercilessly deserted him. Erik, who had taken him under his protection, vainly endeavoured to rouse his courage; he only bemoaned himself and cursed the fate that dogged him.

When, however, he found himself seated by the hospitable fireside of his friend, his spirits began to revive. Bjorn then accepted a suitable post among the companions of Erik, and as his impressions and his memory became clearer, he related the incidents of his voyage and the vision, which stood out promi-

"THE SAME DAY THE MARINERS SIGHTED LAND."

nently among them, of a virgin land, steeped in warmth and sunshine, where great trees bathed their roots in the blue sea.

Erik lent an attentive ear to this narrative, but, contrary to the expectation of Bjorn, he seemed to receive it with disfavour. Indeed, as it proceeded, his face darkened, and he gave unequivocal signs of displeasure. At length, as though he could bear no more, he cried out:

"What! You had before your eyes an unexplored territory, a land fit for royal adventures, and you did not even set foot upon it, so as to mark your passage by one of our sacred runes? You have failed to offer the homage of a new empire to Odin, our Lord! Ah! were Herwolf still living, it is not his blessing but his curse that would await you here. All his pirate blood would curdle at the knowledge that you have betrayed your most sacred duty."

Bjorn heard him with surprise and dread. His life had hitherto been passed in continental adventures. He had gone up the Oder and the Vistula. The Elbe had seen the "horns" of his snail. He had fought upon the coasts of Northumbria; he had advanced so far as the bar of Honfleur; he had touched at Cape Finistère, and sailed along the Iberian coast, and in these distant expeditions he had almost forgotten his own national traditions. Now he remembered them, but it was too late.

Erik continued, becoming more excited as he spoke:

"Yes, I tell you so; with Herwolf the glorious line of the sea-kings is extinct. He was the last, and his name will fitly close the immaculate list of the heroes of Valhalla. Return to your voyages, degenerate son. Go and solicit the post of Chamberlain to the Duke of Normandy. Perhaps he will deign to give it you. You have nothing more to do among us. Go!"

Bjorn Herwolfson bowed his head beneath the weight of this malediction, and, contrite of soul, without any farewell, he rejoined his ship and went his way upon the waters.

CHAPTER III.

LEIF ERIKSON.

Erik's son, Leif, finds Bjorn at the Court of Norway; and proposes that they shall undertake together an exploration of the land which Bjorn saw on his voyage homewards.

The year 1000 draws near. Fourteen years have elapsed since the expedition of Bjorn Herwolfson. Nevertheless, the vision of a land with a mild climate, sun-steeped shores, and hills clothed with mysterious forests, has left its traces upon the dwellers in Greenland.

Leif especially, Leif, the second son of Erik the Red, a grown man now, full of curiosity by nature, and bold of spirit, is deeply impressed by that discovery. He would take up the adventure on his own sole account, but that he is inexperienced in the art of navigation, and the marine lore of the Greenland pilots is limited to the ordinary incidents of the traffic between their country and Iceland.

Leif Erikson went to Iceland, where he began his apprenticeship, that island then being at the height of its prosperity; afterwards he proceeded to Nor-

way, the mother country, after all, and the only one that produced good ships and good seamen.

His rank procured him admittance to the Court. The dissensions of the past were at an end. The Norse nobility, having learned prudence, and become disciplined, had rallied round the royal person and power. Hakon, a forerunner of Louis XIV., had filled the Nadiros palace with noble lords who held various offices, and were laden with honours and favours, but were also entirely destitute of authority. His successor, Olaf Trygvason, had pursued a similar course, and all would have gone smoothly but for the intervention of the religious question.

Hakon had allowed himself to be influenced by Christian morals. From England, where he had been brought up in the new religion at the Court of King Athelstan, he imported several missionaries, with the intention of favouring the propagation of their faith. In fact, immediately after his arrival in his kingdom, he convoked a great national assembly, and, rising, announced in loud tone his good pleasure that all his subjects, "rich or poor, nobles, peasants, or serfs, young or old, men or women," should be baptised, and that all of them, without exception, should believe in one God, "the only true God, the son of Mary, who died for our sins."

As it may be supposed, this proposal was not to the taste of the Jarls, that is to say, the nobles,

neither did it please the priests or the people. Murmurs arose amid the assembly, and its most distinguished members subsequently conveyed the general discontent to the king, and informed him that it had been resolved to abandon him and select another ruler, if he did not consent to renounce his project for the compulsory conversion of the people.

Hakon was obliged to give way before such a threat as this; but he covertly contended against what he regarded as an insolent act of rebellion. When he presided at the sacrifices he would make the sign of the Cross, even while consecrating drinking-horns and sacred cups to the gods of Valhalla; he gave feasts in honour of warriors who died on the field of battle, and drank to the Valkyries, their messengers; but he kept Sunday as a holy day, and fasted on Friday; lastly, he, to the full extent of his power, patronised the churches and convents which were built in the country, much to the displeasure of the people.

On his death-bed, when those present asked him for his final instructions, he spoke as follows: "If I had lived longer, I would have departed from my kingdom and my country, and retired into a Christian land to expiate my sins, and confirm my faith; since it is my lot to die here, do with my body as you will. Pagan I have lived; give me pagan burial."

Olaf Trygvason was not so easily dealt with.

Being summoned by the popular assembly to reign over Norway, he accepted power only upon the condition of exercising it as an absolute sovereign. He then began by making a progress through the kingdom accompanied by his priests, promising gifts and rewards to those who would consent to receive baptism, attracting the vulgar by pretended visions and mock miracles, and threatening the rebellious with severe punishment. For his own greater sanctification he had himself baptised three times, first by a hermit monk in the island of Sicily, then solemnly in London and at Rouen, in each instance by a bishop; and he did not mean to allow his people to dispute his apostolate.

Just at this time the son of Erik the Red came to Norway, and Olaf immediately discerned the value of such a recruit. It was urgently desirable that the vitality and prosperity which existed in the colonies of Greenland and Iceland should be turned to account, but hitherto there had been nobody to undertake the task. Leif was evidently the man of destiny in this instance, and the king hastened to attach him to his person. Of course, he began by endeavouring to convert him to the Christian faith, but the son of Erik at first rejected his overtures.

Olaf then resolved to rely on certain events which he was secretly arranging for the overcoming of

Erikson's objections. He had a bold stroke in contemplation, and was convinced that neither the young Greenlander nor any of those who witnessed it would be able to resist it.

Olaf had resolved to undertake a crusade in the northern portion of his kingdom. He left Throndjem, his capital, accompanied by a numerous suit, in which several prelates and monks of various orders were included, with the great nobles of the kingdom. Several conversions were effected by these ministers of religion among the lower orders along the route of the royal progress, but the nobles proved more obstinate. By order of Olaf, all knights whom he might meet on his way were bound to join his escort. When he had thus collected a sufficient number, as he thought, he came to a halt. By this time he had progressed so far northwards as the Island of Mœre, on which stood the Temple of Thor, the tutelary divinity of Norway. Here it was that the king had resolved to put an end to the resistance he had encountered.

He proclaimed a *Thing*, or Provincial Assembly, on the island. From all sides came chiefs, tenants, and peasants, eager to respond to his summons; and when the great day arrived, the king, standing on a raised platform, put the solemn and definitive abjuration of the national religion to the vote.

This proposition was received with uproar of a

threatening kind. The Jarls, brandishing their swords, raised the cry of revolt; the people followed with a chorus of curses, and Jarns Kegg, the high priest, was advancing in a fury towards Olaf, when the king cast his javelin with unerring aim at the statue of Thor, which was dashed down and broken.

At this spectacle the bystanders were struck with amazement, and fell upon their knees, converted to the worship of the God of the Christians, who thus extended His protection to one who had profaned the sacred image. Leif Erikson was among the most deeply impressed. Not only was he converted, but he soon became remarkable for edifying piety. The king himself was sponsor at his baptism; and in order to utilise his "first fervours," Olaf entrusted the distinguished neophyte with the missionary enterprise of converting the Greenlanders to Christianity.

In vain did Leif represent the opposition he would have to encounter from his father, whose firm faith in the Scandinavian gods could not be shaken; in vain did he plead his own extreme youth and his position as a younger son. Olaf would not listen to anything he could urge. "God wills it so," was his sole reply, and, in order to overcome the last scruples of his guest, he gave him a fine ship with a gilded prow, and a golden cross for its figurehead, purple sails fringed with gold, and gilded buckles along

LEIF ERIKSON FINDING BJORN.

the sides. He also gave a splendid farewell banquet at the Nadiros Palace in Leif's honour.

The son of Erik the Red had now become one of the most highly favoured personages of the Norwegian Court ; and his rank would be still farther elevated by the importance of his mission; but, notwithstanding all this, his thoughts dwelt upon the unknown shore at which Bjorn Herwolfson had merely glanced. All his projects and plans had this fair land for their object.

Now it chanced that on the very eve of his setting sail he met upon the beach a sailor whose face attracted his attention. He observed the man more closely and uttered an exclamation of surprise. It was Bjorn, but Bjorn aged, bent, and ragged. Leif ran forward to fold him in his arms, but the former pirate pushed him away.

"Your father cursed me," said he, "and since then misfortune has dogged my steps. My last ship gone down. My fortune, my fame, my life,— gone down ! Now I am dragging out a miserable existence which I loathe, and I call with all my heart's desire on death the liberator."

Leif, much surprised and even startled at first, looked compassionately on the shadow of the man whom he had known fourteen years previously, young, full of eager life, handsome and bright as the day. He speedily recovered himself, however, and,

by a sudden inspiration which showed him the fulfilment of his dreams as in a mirage, he said, impetuously :

" No, Bjorn, your hour is not come, and I tell you your trials are over. Follow me, we shall find once more the land you discovered, and the profit and renown that the re-discovery shall procure for us, we will share. You shall command the expedition — "

" No, no, my son. The gods have deprived me of my *Sneggar*, and I should only bring bad luck to any ship that had me for its master, especially to yours, for again I say it, your father cursed me."

" But I have too little experience to carry out such an enterprise successfully. Bjorn, I entreat you not to forsake me. Since you will not be master you shall be my mate, my champion, my companion. Do you consent ? "

Bjorn hesitated. Many thoughts were contending in his mind. Leif's proposal pleased him, but he had to take into account the fatality which had clung to him for fourteen years. At last he said :

" Hear me, Leif. To do you a service I am willing to accompany you, but on one condition ; it is that your father shall take command of your ship. His hand is always sure, his experience is profound, and his rank and authority will avert the ill luck which my presence on board cannot fail to bring to your enterprise."

The son of Erik protested strongly against these words.

"You cannot mean what you are saying, Bjorn! My father is growing old; he has given up the sea for a long time past, and his ship was lost like your own."

"You are taking to him a finer, better, swifter ship than any he ever had. He will reign like a sovereign on board, and his experience will be an additional guarantee for the success of the expedition. His destiny has given him the land for his domain, but he is of the race of the old sea-kings, who never sought refuge under a roof or emptied their drinking horns beside a hearth fire."

Leif attempted some farther objections; then, seeing that Bjorn's resolution was invincible, he desisted, and applied himself to making sure of his adherence to his promise of accompanying the expedition. His first proceeding was to equip the former pilot as well as he could, and to buckle his own sword at his side; then he presented Bjorn to the assembled crew as his quartermaster, enjoining upon them that he was to be obeyed like Leif himself.

The anchor was raised on the following day, with a favourable wind, and, sometime after, land was made at Brattehild, where Herwolf's former host resided.

On seeing his ship, with its gilded sides, and its sails of precious stuffs, and recognising his favourite

son clad in shining armour, Erik could not repress an exclamation of mingled pride and reproach. The old pirates did not sail in such ships as this one. And then, what was that strange emblem at the prow in the place of the traditional dragon or the long-necked chimera? And then, what did that severe-looking man, dressed in a gown, like a woman, and before whom everybody on board bowed down, signify?

The severe-looking man was no other than the missionary whom Olaf had sent with his *protégé* to bring about the conversion of the Greenlanders; but Leif did not care to explain the motive and aim of this personage just then. He avoided answering easily, for the sight of Bjorn Herwolfson enraged the former pirate. He had already raised his arms to curse him anew, when Bjorn, who was not at all disconcerted, spoke up, and related all that had happened, in a clear voice.

It was not difficult to make Erik the Red change his mind concerning the son of Herwolf. To the ear of his father's old friend his words had the ring of sincerity and real feeling, and his demeanour in his sailor's costume, which he had been careful to resume for the occasion, was so simple and unassuming that Erik was actually sorry for his own wrath in the long ago, took the anathema off his son's mate, and predicted a fortunate future for him.

He even went farther; he almost entered into his views, and appeared not unwilling to join the expedition and even to direct it in Leif's name with Bjorn as lieutenant.

This notion took decisive form when Erik learned the apostolic intentions of his son. He impatiently interrupted the first words that the convert tried to say in favour of the new faith.

"Silence!" said he, "and observe my orders. I mean to take possession of the land that we are going to discover, according to our customs and in the name of our gods. And first, away with that show ship! I have vessels of my own, less sumptuous, but they can defy storms and raging seas. I will attempt this adventure with one of these."

Having thus spoken, the old pirate, to whom the vigour of his youth had returned, desired his wife, Thorhilda, to hide his gold and silver, for the Scandinavian rites sanctioned the belief that warriors enjoyed in Valhalla, after their death, the wealth they had concealed in the earth here below. Then, having got ready his arms and made the customary sacrifices to the gods, he mounted his warhorse in order to proceed to the beach. But the horse fell on the way, and Erik's head was badly cut. Then he said to those about him:

"Fortune does not mean me to make new discoveries; we shall not go far together. Is this a warn-

ing from Fate? Go your ways, young men, embark on your ship with the red sails, and, if your golden cross fronts new lands, I will believe that it finds favour with our gods, and I will receive baptism — yes, I and mine."

So saying, he turned back, went home, and on the spot bade Thorhilda disinter his riches, because it it was labour lost to have hidden them.

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CHAPTER IV.

VINLAND.

After some tacking, the mariners go ashore in a glorious country. — There they find grapes and make wine. — They give the name of Vinland to the newly-discovered country. — They found a colony, which they call Leifs-Budir, and remain there for one year.

TRUSTING in his star, and guided by the experience of Bjorn, Leif steered southwest towards the unknown coasts, with sails spread to the north wind, which was kindly favourable to our explorers. He had with him thirty-six companions, including a chaplain, a Skald or popular reciter, and a German named Tyrker, who acted as a servant. Among the sailors, selected from the hardiest of their class, good humour, courage, and mutual good-will prevailed. It was felt by all that one same thought, one same desire united them, — the success of the enterprise, and this looked likely from the beginning. In the distance, the outlines of land were discernible, blue as land always is on the horizon, and full of promise. Then, when it was approached, its outlines spread out and became flat, rough rocks

took the place of the dimly seen hills, and the whole country assumed the aspect of a cemetery.

Leif thought: "I will not pitch my tent here." Nevertheless, he went ashore, and struck into the interior. There he found stones upon stones, rocks upon rocks, boulders upon boulders. "This," said the son of Erik, "is a stony-hearted country!" and he called the desolate corner of the earth Helluland, or the land of stones. Then he set sail again for the high seas. They knew now how the land lay, and it mattered little that they should leave it, to sail at their ease. Some days they passed between the blue sky and the green sea, without a trace of mist on the face of the ocean. It was a splendid voyage. The prow was turned again to the southwest and no doubt was felt that new land would soon be in sight. No signal was made by the lookout, however; day succeeded day, but no blue hill showed on the level horizon. "Could Bjorn have deceived us?" Leif questioned himself, but instantly rejected the idea. At length, one evening when the sun was going down into the waves, a sort of shadow was thrown upon its disk. No more doubt. This meant land. And, in fact, on the morrow, daybreak found the ship, which was under half sail, within a few cables' length of a low coast formed of very white sand hills with a background of great trees with tops resembling domes of verdure spreading far and wide.

Leif and his companions contemplated this spectacle with speechless admiration. The chaplain, standing at the prow, stretched out his arms, and implored the divine blessing upon the unknown land, while Aulaf the Skald, standing on the poop, extolled the deeds and glory of their ancestors, much to the delight of the crew.

Then Bjorn, who was near him, said: "Gay Minstrel, henceforth you may sing not only what you have learned from your forerunners, but what you have seen with your own eyes."

And in truth, Aulaf tuned his lyre, and sang of the white beach, the trees whose summits were lost in the azure of the sky, and the warrior in armour of gold, who knelt at the prow in seeming ecstasy before his discovery.

When Leif came out of the sort of trance into which his mind had fallen, his companions drew near to him. Bjorn was the foremost, and Leif clasped him in his arms for several minutes in silence; then, pointing to the exuberant vegetation before their eyes, he enquired of him:

"Is this the same land that you formerly beheld?"

"No," replied the son of Herwolf. "The trees that I saw bathed their branches in the sea, no hills of fine sand lay between them and it. But what matter? The difference proves that we are coasting a vast continent. Let us then keep along the shore

until we come to a port in which our ship may find shelter. Thence we may safely proceed to investigate the treasures that such a country must surely contain."

"You are right," said Leif.

And yet he could hardly remove his gaze from the fair landscape, so entrancing to eyes unused to any save the northern aspect of nature, and give the necessary orders to the crew.

Now the mariners knew that they were near land, and frequently they saw it; but they were forced to keep away from it on account of the breakers and sand banks. Occasionally, too, they discovered islands. One of these lay off a promontory which extended beyond it on the northeast and the east. This they reached two days after leaving Markland (or "the wooded land") — this was the name given by Leif to his second discovery. Then the ship entered a rather narrow strait which separated the mainland from two large islands. The coasts were low, and covered with huge flat stones. Beyond the strait was a bay, and lastly, having coasted along another island, the ships entered a clear, flowing river that came straight from a mountain visible in the distance.

The explorers' course was one of marvellous pleasure to the eye. Gigantic trees, most of them of unknown species, formed a lofty dome-like roof over

the water. Flowers and fruits of strange form and tint hung from the branches in bunches, in clusters, in sheaves. Thousands of bright-plumed birds hovered around the ships like moths attracted by a light. Ere long, the mariners reached a grassy cove where shrubs, whose stems were washed by the water, grew in groups. There could be no better place for the setting up of a village, and, although the night was coming on, Leif proceeded to take possession of it with the ceremonies peculiar to the Scandinavians. While some of his companions lighted a fire, whose rays were to indicate the limit of his new domain, others ran in every direction, axe in hand, and marked their passage by cutting symbols on the trees and the rocks. Sentinels were set at various points, and then, at length, the chief and his men lay down to sleep under a sycamore whose thick foliage exhaled a pleasant perfume.

At sunrise, one division of the party undertook the construction of wooden huts after the Norwegian fashion, while Leif and a few followers explored the surrounding country in order to ascertain its nature and resources. The latter surpassed his expectations. The various woods were of precious kinds, costly essences, and other products of commercial value abounded, furred and feathered game was plentiful, and the river and lake contained fine salmon and fish of many other kinds.

When the huts were built, all hands coöperated in the founding of the little colony. While a certain number of men took charge of the stores and the dwellings, the remainder of the band made daily expeditions to augment the resources and the supplies of the settlement to which Leif had given the name of Leifs-Budir. In a short time, numerous cattle were feeding in the grassy cove, and the outhouses were filled with sacks of grain, and blocks of red and yellow wood, acrid-scented resin, exquisitely fine and light furs, and feathers of brighter tints than flaunting pennons. Leif ardently desired to come upon gold, so as to fill coffers and barrels with the precious metal, but he failed to discover anything of that kind. On the other hand, a lucky chance brought him a most unexpected surprise.

Each day it was his custom to order the men who went out exploring not to separate, and to return to sleep at the huts. One evening, Tyrker, the German, did not answer to the roll-call. As he was cook, his absence was doubly remarked. Leif, who was partial to fruit and had ordered Tyrker to bring in some, was much annoyed by his non-appearance, and organised a search party, headed by himself. The expedition proved entirely vain, echo only answered to the name of Tyrker. At length, late at night, Tyrker became visible by the firelight, bending under a heavy load. Leif ran to meet him.

"Ah! my purveyor, why do you return so late? Why did you leave your companions?" he cried.

"My lord, I am in fault," answered Tyrker, "and I deserve your censure, but for some time past, certain signs have led me to believe that by going out of our customary tracks, I should discover a treasure. To-day I could not resist the temptation, and see, I have not been mistaken; I bring you back my basket full of fruit. It is not so delicious as that you usually eat, but on the other hand, it contains the divine liquor that cheers the heart and makes life fair."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, my lord, that I have discovered vines laden with grapes."

"Is it possible?"

"I cannot be mistaken, for in my country wine is grown in abundance."

"And you think you could make wine from these grapes?"

"I am sure of it."

"Then your absence has been a blessing. Nothing could please me better than this news."

The next day the entire colony set out to pick grapes, and the wine-press improvised by Tyrker was soon at work upon the big, purple, fleshy fruit. Even the watch shared this task, although without any great confidence in the final result. They

thought the grapes detestable, and wondered what sort of drink could be got out of them. But Leif, who had drunk fine wines at Olaf's court, and Bjorn, who had ravaged the cellars of princes and chiefs, let them talk. They knew what would come out of that wine-press, and the event speedily proved them to be in the right. When the wine was ready for consumption, everybody's mind was changed, and the whole party took to drinking.

Leif set the example. Taunting Odin, who alone gets drunk upon wine at the banquet of the gods, while the champions and the crowd of warriors content themselves with delicious, but vulgar hydromel, he quaffed cup after cup of the divine beverage, drinking health after health and *skoal* after *skoal* to the happy land on which he had had the good fortune to set his foot, and naming it *Vinland*, or the Land of Wine.

From that day, the expeditions, the great wood-fellings, the hunting of furred animals, ceased. Nothing was thought of but the savoury game, dainty fish, and delicious fruits which were served without intermission at the table of the chief, at which all were welcome, where flowers abounded, and the guests feasted to the accompaniment of Aulaf's strains.

Thus the summer was passed and then the autumn, which brought only a few thunder-showers.

Nevertheless, as the days shortened, Leif thought seriously about his departure. According to his calculation the winter must then be at its worst in Greenland, and it would have been foolhardy to attempt to return thither. He resolved to take up his winter quarters at Leifs-Budir. However, to his great surprise, winter did not come. The climate continued so mild that the cattle might be left out at night; there was hardly any frost, and the grass retained its greenness almost unchanged. And so the feasting went on until the wine "gave out" exactly and happily at the time when the condition of the ice-floes rendered the watery way to Greenland free once more.

At the beginning of June, A. D. 1001, after an entire year passed in Vinland, Leif set sail again, entrusting Liefs-Budir to certain of his companions who were tempted to remain by the rich resources and the fine climate of the colony. As before, Bjorn guided him in the right way, and they soon came in view of lofty mountains.

One stormy day the chief perceived a disabled ship at some distance, and quickly descried men on the deck who were making signs of distress. Leif approached, and took on board his own ship Thorer the Shark, a corsair well known in the North seas, and his wife, Gudrid, who was destined to play an important part in the future of the American colonies.

For tradition notwithstanding, it was actually in America that Leif and his companions had made their settlement. No doubt can exist on this subject, and the position of Vinland and Leifs-Budir on the continent is accurately known. This may appear astonishing, miraculous, fabulous ; nevertheless it is the exact truth. America was discovered by Norsemen in the year 1000, that is to say, 492 years before the expedition of Christopher Columbus.

Moreover, America was colonised and worked by them for more than four centuries.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE.

THE foregoing accounts, and those which are to follow, do not belong to the region of romance. They are taken from the *Sagas*, or chronicles of the Monks of Iceland, which were compiled so far back as the year 1148, and were supported by authentic documents. Each country occupied by the Scandinavians has its particular *Sagas*, and the accuracy of those *Sagas* receives continuous confirmation from the archæological discoveries which are constantly made in Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Greenland — *and America.*

"The authors (of the *Sagas*), the ancient Icelanders," says M. Gabriel Gravier, "made no statements at haphazard; they did not draw upon imagination for facts in the absence of authoritative documentary evidence. Their *Sagas* are simple, clear, precise, free from that touch of the marvelous which so often casts a doubt upon the intelligence and the sincerity of monastic historians."

We may then accept what these monks relate

concerning Vinland, as confidently as we accept their writings from Iceland, their point of observation, upon the history of Norway, Denmark, and all other places inhabited by the Scandinavians.

"But," it will be asked, "wherein lies the proof that Vinland is in America?"

"Firstly, in its situation with respect to Greenland; secondly, in the perfect agreement of the territories explored and colonised by the Norsemen, with those with which we are acquainted in North America, whether we consider their geographical conformation, or study their soil, flora, and fauna.

Let us take a modern map and follow Leif Erikson in his voyage of discovery. South of Greenland we find the Island of Newfoundland, the "Kingdom of Stones," Helluland, which is still, on its coast at least, covered with stony ridges whereon neither trees nor grass can grow. Southwest of this chaos is placed our Acadia, which has become the New Scotland of the Anglo-Saxons, has preserved its sandhills and its forests, and is easily to be recognised as the "wooded country," the "Markland" of the Norsemen. Near to it, we shall meet Nauset Island, and Cape Cod; then we coast along the territory of the Nauset Indians, and come into a strait which divides the mainland from Nantucket Island and Martha's Vineyard (Bird Island) of which we shall presently have something to say. The shore of this strait is

low on both sides, and covered with large, flat stones. Now we are in Rhode Island Bay; we coast along its shores, and ascend the Pocasset River, which issues from Mount Hope Bay. Leifs-Budir was there. This region is still called the Paradise of America; its air is more mild and sweet than the surrounding country.

Lastly, it is well known in the United States that the vine is a natural product of Rhode Island. Large, purple grapes, very fleshy, and tart of taste, grow there in great abundance, and are made into wine, which, like Shakespeare's "one man," "plays many parts" at American *tables d'hôte*, appearing, according to the successive courses, as *Mâcon*, *Médoc*, and *Château du Pope*.

Is a more conclusive proof required? Then Leif himself shall supply it. According to his observations, taken daily at Vinland, the shortest day of the year began in that region at half past seven in the morning, and ended at half past four in the afternoon, thus fixing a duration of nine hours. This is in agreement with the geographical indications and the statements of the chronicles which place Leifs-Budir in the region of Providence, 41° 24′ 10″ North latitude.

But there is more, and better still. Archæological science, always on the move, reveals to us that in every place where men have set up dwelling-

places they have left traces of their passage either in inscriptions or in their own remains. America does not form an exception to this rule. There, as elsewhere, the stones and the dead compete in eloquence, and the Norsemen have their share in these revelations.

Part II.

THE NORSEMEN'S COLONIES IN AMERICA FROM THE TENTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BAPTISM OF ERIK THE RED.

Erik the Red, being confronted by the actual fact, allowed himself to be converted to the Christian religion, according to his promise. He hearkened to the words of him whom he had called "the evil man," and, when he was ready to receive baptism, he gathered his people about him, and addressed them thus, in set and solemn speech:

"My friends and companions," he said, "the times are changed; the star of our gods has waned. Before them the universe was wrapped in chaos. There existed neither heaven nor earth, and the abyss was fathomless. *Surtur*, the spirit of Fire, came first, and the giant *Ymer*, born of the flames, with his brethren the *Rimthursar*, genii of evil, furnace-imps, assisted him.

"Space was filled by Fire only, when the gentle

goddess *Burc*, gifted with beauty, grace, and power, was generated in three days from a spark. Her son, Borr, married a giantess, who was the mother of our first gods, Odin, Vile, and Vé.

"Hail to you, veterans of the æther, heroes of the heavenly legends, kings of the first days, and the first nights.

"The times are changed; your star has waned.

"In the meantime you killed Ymer, spirit of nothingness, and of his body you kneaded the Universe. The *Rimthursar* drowned themselves in his blood, and of his flesh you made the earth, of his bones the rocks, and of his hair the grass. His sweat became the ocean; our kingdoms are placed in the midst thereof; and his skull held up by the dwarfs. East, West, South and North was the sky.

"Hail to thee, *Odin*, god of light! Hail to thee. *Natt*, goddess of night! Hail to thee, *Dag*, fair as the day!

"Hail to you all, gods of the forefathers, enthroned in the enchanted palace of As-Gard! Hail to you, goddesses, resplendent at Vingolf! Hail to thee, *Frigga*, who dwellest upon the earth, and animates it with thy virtues.

"Thor, thy son, is the most active, the lightest, the strongest, and the bravest of gods and men. Armed with the handleless hammer he goes on his appointed way in his car drawn by two he-goats. He hurls the

thunderbolt that protects from evil genii. Then for long months each year, he takes his rest in his palace of *Trudoanger*, while the snow falls, and the earth slumbers in pleasant coolness. To thee also, Balder the Beautiful, Son of Odin, hail! Thou art of all the gods the most gracious, the most eloquent, the most amiable and peaceable. Thy beauty shines like the sun-rays. Thine eyes, beaming with lustre, are more lucent than the morning star, and their lashes are bright like the hoar frost. If *Hrasvelg*, the giant, lets loose the storm, thou comest to quell it, for thou art of a gentle nature. Unknown and tranquil livest thou in thy palace of *Breidablik*, and on serene nights presidest at the shining zone that sparkles in the celestial vault.

"Homage to you, ye divinities, who come more nigh to the reach of mortals:

"*Niord*, god of mariners, who commands the waves and the winds.

"*Freyr*, who fertilises the earth by beneficent rain.

"*Bragi*, who dispenses wisdom and poetry to men.

"*Tyr*, the blood-stained patron of heroes, who surpasses all the gods in valour and daring!

"Respect to thee, *Handur*, the sightless, god of darkness! and hail to *Vidar*, the silent, he who can walk in the air and upon the water.

"*Vile* is renowned for his skill in drawing the bow; *Ullir* on his skates outruns the lightning; and *Foresti*,

in his palace of *Glittrer*, upheld on golden pillars and roofed with silver, judges quarrels, and keeps peace among men.

"And you, gentle sisters of *Frigga*, be ye blessed: *Gna*, fair messenger of the queen of the earth; *Fylla*, who has charge of her attire; *Freya*, goddess of beauty, whose eyes weep tears of pure gold; *Idunna*, who offers to the god in sparkling vases the celestial men whom they eat to perpetuate their immortality; *Vara*, who presides over the sanctity of oaths; *Siona*, who causes the gentle affections to live in the breasts of men; and *Lofna*, who reconciles enemies; *Snotra*, grand-mistress of the Court, who diffuses fine manners; *Eyra*, the innocent, who prepares simples for the sick gods, and even to thee, *Synia*, humble portress of the goddesses, hail!

"Yes, to all of you, women and maidens of our radiant heaven, I give homage, loving and discreet! And to you, ye warrior-nymphs, daughters of Odin, who help the brave in battle, and who carry away their corpses on your steeds to Valhalla, be glory and the voice of trumpets! The clouds are shaken and illumined; it is by the rush of the coursers of the Valkyries. Grand were ye, and sublime, *Skuld*, *Skangul*, *Gunnu Hilda*, *Gaundrol*. Is your reign over? Has your star also waned? Alas! Alas! Alas! The times are changed! The prophets had foretold the end of the fortunate days.

"Our gods lived in unity too complete; this could not last. When in a fatal hour they took for their betrothed the daughters of giants, the *Gullveiga* (weigher of gold) found entry into their palace and gave them to taste of lucre, which soon bred envy in them. *Loki the Rogue*, who surpassed all the others in perfidy and knavery, installed himself in their dwellings and sat by their hearth fires. *Fenrir*, the wolf, took the place of the fond and faithful dog, and *Mid-gard*, the serpent, cast his coils around the world. Men mingled with the gods, and aided them to oppose the evil; but they strove in vain. Although they succeeded in binding Fenrir with a magic chain and casting him into the sea, where he gnawed his tail, Gullveiga, thrown three times into the flames, three times arose from his ashes. The giants were conquered, not subdued. By the help of Loki they seized upon Idunna, and emboldened by this success, they ventured to attack Valhalla.

"Henceforth, the fate of the heavenly kingdom depended upon Balder; but a *vala*, prophetess of the infernal region, predicted his death. Then Frigga cursed all the living and inanimate things of heaven and earth to swear that they would do no harm to her beloved son. Fire, water, plants, and rocks were bound by this oath. The mistletoe alone had been forgotten, to the destruction of the most gracious and most eloquent of the gods, for Loki,

suspecting the omission, put an arrow made from a branch of mistletoe into the hands of Handur the Sightless, and in a tournament Balder was killed.

"Since that time others have died also. I tell you, my companions, that our gods are leaving us, that their star has waned. The star of the powerful Being who governs all, and who, having come down from His lofty throne, is advancing to do justice, and to spread His beneficence abroad among men, is now shining in solitary splendour. In Him, I feel there is strength, power, and the truth. I bow down before Thee, God of the Christians, God of Olaf, God of Miracles, and, as Thou wilt not have unwilling service, I attach myself to Thee, O my God, with all the force of my soul and of my fidelity."

Having thus spoken, the old sea-king knelt down before the missionary, who read the formula of the oath, while Erik the Red repeated the words in faltering voice.

"I promise and I solemnly swear no more to sacrifice to the national divinities, but to adore that God who alone has created the world and all that exists: the sun, the stars, the children of men. And, even though Thor were to be by my side, what succour could I look for from a god whose sole power resides in a tree trunk or a stone?"

THE BAPTISM OF ERIK THE RED.

Then did the priest slowly pour the water of baptism upon the white head of Herwolf's old companion.

And the legend tells that the cross upon the prow of Leif Erikson's ship sparkled like light.

CHAPTER VII.

ONE "DEAD, YET SPEAKING."

Leif, enriched by his expedition, settles in Greenland.— His brother, Thorwald, sails, in 1002, for Vinland, and easily finds the coast. In the spring of 1003, he undertakes a voyage of exploration in the North.— He is killed in an encounter with the *Skrellings* (Eskimo), who were then invading America, whence they were afterwards driven away. — Discovery of Thorwald's grave.

THE companions and followers of Erik the Red proved less amenable than their chief, "The Good Word," and this despite the entreaties of Thornhild, his wife, who was won over to the Christian cause from the first, and also notwithstanding the activity of Leif, who was called Leif the Fortunate, after his successful expedition.

Leif speedily became the most high and puissant lord in Greenland, his father having died shortly after his return. Erik's eldest son, Thorstein, had generously renounced his paternal succession beforehand in order to augment his illustrious brother's wealth, so that Leif was crowned with riches and honours and simply gave himself to a life of opulence and pleasure.

Although Greenland was a free State, without either chief or council, the former guest of the King of Norway thought proper to set up a Court for himself there, after the example of Olaf the Magnificent, and although he did not actually assume a royal crown, he kept sovereign state. Banquet succeeded banquet at his table, and his guests, like the warriors of fable, passed their time in continuous festivity. The joyous days of Leifs-Budir were renewed at Brattehild, lacking only the mild climate and the exquisite woodland, constantly sung by Aulaf the Skald, in odes and songs which appealed to the recollections of Leif Erikson's companions and stimulated the curiosity of those who had not seen the land of wine. One of these was Thorwald, the third son of Erik the Red. He dreamed, as his brother in former days had dreamed, of great adventures and discoveries; he even imparted his ideas to Bjorn Herwolfson, but the latter, lapped in the luxury of Brattehild, refused to take part in a second expedition.

Nevertheless, in the spring of 1002, a ship which its master had christened *The Vinland*, set sail for that highly favoured colony. The vessel was commanded by Thorwald, who had been joined by some bold pioneers athirst for conquest, and several former companions of Leif. Among the latter was Aulaf, who longed for the tempered winds and the new wine.

Leifs-Budir was readily refound, now much extended and improved by the settlers, who had cleared the fertile land in the vicinity of their dwellings, and widened the field of their exploration. As for the wine, it had been so abundant and so delicious in the preceding season, that Tyrker, the German, had died of it, "consumed like a burning torch." Happily, he had trained some promising pupils, so that Thorwald and his companions were enabled to form a practical appreciation of the merits, virtues, and charms of the precious nectar.

The ensuing summer and winter were passed in libations, but in the spring of 1003, Thorwald, who was suffering from malignant fever and unable to join the expedition in person, despatched a reconnoitering party to the south of Vinland. There his men saw a beautiful country covered with timber. Between the forest and the shore lay a narrow strip of white sand. The sea, dotted with islands like flower beds, formed a vast roadstead, and the ship glided swiftly over its waters, stately and graceful as the swan whose form it wore. In the distance, westward, lay an island (probably Long Island). There the Norsemen landed, and finding everything in abundance, they loaded the *Vinland* with wood, skins, and spices, which added to the stock of merchandise accumulated at Leifs-Budir.

The following summer, Thorwald, being restored

to health, organised a fresh voyage of discovery under his own command. This time the ship was steered northwards, with the intention of taking a western course on sighting the cape which had been dimly seen by Leif at the time of his arrival in the country, and reconnoitering the land on that side.

Everything was going well with the expedition, when, just off the cape, a strong gale arose. The *Vinland*, a swift sailer, but unable to contend with the violence of such a sea, was flung upon the coast, and her keel was jammed upon a rock at the extreme point of the promontory. Several days were required for the repair of the vessel, which had sustained serious damage. The country was stony and without vegetation, and the men had to go a long distance inland to procure the wood that was necessary. This lost time, was, however, redeemed by the well-known skill and celerity of the Norsemen as carpenters, and the *Vinland*, new-keeled, repaired, and repainted in bright colours, was soon in sea-going trim. As the commander and crew were going on board, Thorwald said to his companions:

"What has happened to us was bound to occur. Look at the point of land there; is it not like a careened ship? Let us give it the name of Kjalarnes (Careen Cape) in remembrance of our adventure."

On quitting this inhospitable coast, Thorwald steered westward in pursuance of his plan, and finally came to an anchor, with the intention of landing close to a second promontory, no doubt Cape Alderton. A wonderful country lay before his eyes, and Thorwald exclaimed in admiration:

"This is the most magnificent land we have yet come to. I had never dreamed of any fairer or more fruitful. There would I build my dwelling-place."

The scene did, indeed, present manifold attractions. From the shade of the great trees that bordered the beach rose sweet scents, and the song and cooing of birds. A languorous calm pervaded the air, and the breeze, landward-borne by the waves, wafted a delicious coolness to the woods. Thorwald's men were charmed and astonished. They roamed about, aimlessly, in the midst of that luxuriant vegetation which was all new to them. The fruits seemed so sweet that the men feared the presence of some subtle poison in them, and the flowers sent forth so delightful an aroma that a strange intoxication seized upon their senses on inhaling it. Beneath the thick-leaved branches flowed rivulets bright as steel, studded here and there with flowery islets, and swarming with fish, glittering in the sunshine. Within arm's length, bright-plumed birds, presumably good for food, flut-

"A WONDERFUL COUNTRY LAY BEFORE HIS EYES."

tered fearlessly, and unknown animals, worthy, no doubt, to figure on the most sumptuous tables, abounded in the glades, and even familiarly approached the strangers.

One feature only this splendid landscape lacked,—Man! and to his absence its wealth and its splendour were due. The axe and the hatchet had not yet attacked the precious essence-bearing timber; culture had not enslaved those flowers and fruits; the arrow and the javelin had not pierced either fur or feathers; everything was there to be conquered, to be destroyed. This fact the pirates of the North readily observed, and their admiration was coupled with covetousness that might be read in their eyes. Thorwald, only, in all the pride of his discovery, enjoyed, as an artist, the perfection of his new dominion. "Yes," he repeated, "here it will indeed be good to remain and enjoy sweet repose." Nevertheless, as evening was drawing nigh, the fortunate explorers had to regain their ship.

All their plans for settling were postponed until the morrow, and the party, mustered by the blowing of a horn, took its way to the beach.

There, an unforeseen spectacle awaited the explorers. In the full light of the setting sun they perceived three canoes, rudely formed, and covered with leather, each occupied by three human beings,—if that name may be given to the abject creatures who

met the wondering gaze of Thorwald and his companions. By their dusky skin, their mops of lightish hair, their big, broad faces, disproportioned like the rest of their bodies, the Norsemen had quickly recognised them as *Skrellings*, or Eskimo. They did not enquire how these Borean people had come into the bosom of this fair southern land; nor could they guess that the Eskimo, who have been driven back to their original ice-plains in later ages, invaded the American coast, where they have left many traces of their passage, for centuries. But they did know that they had before them the traditional enemy, the foul-smelling beast, the gnome abhorred of their race, and this was enough for them. Without concert, without command, by instinct, and instantly, they rushed upon the miserable creatures and slaughtered them on the spot. Only one escaped from the massacre by throwing himself into the sea, and none of the slayers thought of pursuing him. That night there were great rejoicings on board the ship on account of the big butchery. The good wine of Leifs-Budir flowed freely, and the explorers drank deep to the extermination of all the *Skrellings* in existence, beginning with those whom they proposed to hunt down on the morrow. All the old blood of the pirates of former times awoke and surged up in the veins of these young men who had been accustomed by the circumstances to the pleasant but

enervating practice of pacific expeditions. The *Skrellings* signified, if not actual war, at least the image of war, and their sudden appearance was hailed with joy. In course of time, however, the jovial boon companions felt their eyes closing under the influence of their potations. Song and laughter died away in the majestic calm of the night, and there came a moment when the echoes of the sea repeated only the monotonous sound of the waves breaking upon the shore. Then, in the starlight, came canoes similar to those that the Norsemen had perceived in the early evening, and they came from all sides, advancing like a diabolic fleet, and, by skilful manoeuvring, placing themselves in a circle, so as to surround the ship and lay siege to it. The sailors, sleeping on the deck, heard nothing, suspected nothing. Suddenly, a confused noise awakened Thorwald, who had also fallen asleep leaning against the tiller. A voice which seemed to rise from the waves called to him: "Up, Thorwald, up! if you would save your life! Cut the cables! Off! Off!" Just at first he thought he was dreaming, but, having cleared away the clouds that obscured his thoughts, by a strong effort of his will, he darted a keen, inquiring glance into the billows that surged beneath his feet, and, despite the vague dimness of night, he distinguished something like drifts of seaweed. Listening intently, he detected a murmuring sound which

drew nearer and nearer, and was drowned, at intervals, by hoarse cries with nothing human in their tone. Then Thorwald, comprehending the matter, sprang up like a lion, and, unsheathing his sword, rushed towards the netting, where the lank forms of the wretched dwarfs were already visible in profile.

"Up! Up! Comrades!" he shouted, in a voice of thunder. "The *Skrellings* are upon us!" At this summons, the suddenly sobered crew rushed upon the hostile swarm. A scene of butchery ensued. Swords and hatchets clove the live flesh of the assailants; their mutilated hands slipped off the deck while their bodies fell heavily into the water. But they were not vanquished yet; the dead were replaced by others, who attacked the ships as hornets attack a hostile hive.

Only when the dawn shed its pale, blue light upon that scene of carnage did the conflict cease; the *Skrellings* being then too much exposed, pulled away from the vicinity of the ship, raining a shower of arrows upon the defenders of the *Vinland*. Even then the latter killed a great number by harpoon and javelin casts; afterwards the crimsoned sea remained silent, covering the corpses of the intrepid gnomes with its long waves.

When they had disappeared, to the very last of them, Thorwald mustered his companions. He

asked them if they were wounded, and on their replying that they were not, he said:

"I am. The arrow that you see here pierced me under the arm pit, after it had glided off my shield. I shall surely die of the wound. As for you, my friends, I counsel you to prepare to depart as quickly as possible, and to leave me on this promontory where I was to have built my house. I have prophesied my fate, for I shall remain here some time. You will then bury me in that place over there under the great trees, where the perfume from their blossoms will fall upon me, and you will place two crosses on my grave, one at the head, the other at the foot, so that in the future this cape may be called *Krossanes*, the Cape of the Crosses."

Thorwald was right; his wound was mortal. The arrow that had entered his breast was poisoned. He expired that same day, and his companions, fearing that the *Skrellings* might return to the attack, hastened to carry out his last instructions. They collected stones and constructed a mausoleum after the manner of their country, and in it they laid their chief, arrayed in his vesture of command, and holding his sword in his joined hands. Then they returned sorrowfully to Leifs-Budir, where they loaded their ship with various products that they might not return to Greenland empty-handed.

Thorwald was right in saying that he should remain "some time" in the place he had selected for his burial. His tomb, built of cemented stones, and in masonry, containing a skeleton and an *iron* sword, was discovered centuries after.

This "find" immediately made a commotion among the transatlantic learned societies, which were already numerous. Archæologists and poets crowded to that part of the country, and all came to the conclusion that no similar tomb existed in any other point of the New World; that the skeleton, judged by its proportions and the peculiarities of its conformation, could not be either that of an Indian or that of a European later than the expedition of Christopher Columbus; and, finally, that the workmanship of the sword hilt belonged to a period far anterior to the fifteenth century.

The political and military troubles which tore and distracted North America, and resulted in her independence, turned the minds of men away from the historical studies to which young America now devotes itself with passionate ardour, in its eagerness to grow old, and to discover its European grandsires.

Unfortunately, many genealogical proofs have entirely disappeared. It is, however, certain, concerning the skeleton, that it was seen, verified, discussed, and recognised as that of a Scandinavian, at

a period when the Americans were not acquainted either with the *Sagas* of the North, or with the coincidence of localities which are revealed by them.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BLANK VOYAGE.

Thorstein, the eldest son of Erik, tries to reach Vinland with Gudrid, his wife; but they are cast on the east coast of Greenland, and Thorstein dies of the plague (1005).

During Thorwald's expedition, Thorstein, the eldest son of Erik, had married Gudrid, the widow of Thorer the Shark, whom Leif had rescued from death, as already related, on his voyage home from Vinland.

Gudrid was remarkable for her beauty, her personal dignity, capacity, prudence, and, as we learn from the *Saga*, "her facility in the art of conversing with strangers." She had promptly become the soul, the jewel, the "precious pearl" of the Court of Brattehild. Her graciousness won general homage and devotion, and her warlike adventures in the past had set the stamp of courage, resolution, and high capacity upon her brow. She was called Gudrid the Queen, and also Gudrid the Victorious, for she

had reigned on the sea, and the enemies slain by her hand were legion.

When Thorwald's companions returned without their chief, no one was more keenly afflicted by his dismal fate than this heroic woman, whose pity for the dead man was enhanced by her wrath, and such a desire for reprisals as made her look back with bitter regret to the time when she commanded at sea by her first husband's side.

Aulaf, who was also burning to avenge his master, had remarked this mood of hers, and he fanned the flame. No banquet was given, no festival was held at Brattehild,—for the Court had resumed its joyous customs and aspect—but the Skald extolled the heroic deeds of the woman-pirates. He sang the "Virgins of the Shield," so-called because their little sky blue bucklers glinted in the shock of the battle. He pictured those daughters of brave men, Ijétha and Visina, with their companions, fighting at the battle of Brevalla, where all the forces of the North were arrayed. But never did his enthusiasm find such glowing words, and his spirit soar so high, as when he evoked the legendary image of Athild, daughter of Sigurd. Then the soul of the poet was filled with the ardour of the warrior, and his voice shook with emotion as he poured out her story and her panegyric:

"She was chaste, beautiful, and brave. A thick

veil shielded her face from the curiosity of the vulgar. Alone she lived in a leafy bower, whose entrance was guarded by two champions, strongest of the strong, and bravest of the brave.

"Sigurd had made proclamation that every knight who should aspire to the hand of his daughter, must first fight the two giants, but also, in case of defeat, death should be the penalty of so daring and presumptuous an enterprise.

"Alf, a young pirate king, accepted the challenge, and, as he was a consummate fighter, he killed the two champions. Athild, being resolved to keep her freedom, fled to the sea with her companions, who were clad like herself in men's garments, and armed with weapons of war.

"Long time they roamed as chance dictated, but at length there came a day when they encountered a fleet without a chief, and the dauntless Amazon was chosen to command it. Thus did Athild sweep the seas as a pirate captain, plundering ships and ravaging coasts.

"Shortly after, it came to pass that Alf, being ignorant of Athild's refuge, gave chase to her squadron, and pursued her even to the Gulf of Finland, where she was obliged to accept battle.

"Then Alf and his companions boarded the ship on which the princess was, and she defended herself bravely. In the thick of the fight, her helmet having

THE ENDLESS REVERIE OF GUDRID.

been split by the stroke of an axe, Athild revealed her angelic face, and, being disarmed by her conqueror, she accepted him as her lord."

The Skald ceased to speak, the guests indulged in noisy demonstrations, and drained their cups in homage to the valiant woman-warrior and her illustrious vanquisher ; but Gudrid remained in deep and silent reverie. The little blue bucklers of Ijétha and Visina glittered before her eyes, she heard the ring of the axe as it came down upon Athild's helmet. Then her thoughts returned to her own former exploits, to the fights in which she, too, like those famous Virgins of the Shield, had brandished axe and wielded sword. How the times had changed! The dead calm, the dullness and distaste of a too easy life, had replaced the excitement, the fever, the beneficent delirium of her glorious days. The ceaseless roll of the sea at the foot of the steep coast was like the drum-beat of the past, and afar off was the free open air, the mysterious horizon, the ocean wave always charged with the unforeseen. Ah! why was not Thorstein Alf — or Thorer?

The eldest son of Erik was an unlikely sort of person to share the views of his war-like spouse. Nevertheless, Gudrid did not despair of awakening him to more virile ambition. She laid siege to his somnolent disposition, aroused a feeling of curiosity in his indolent mind, and finally triumphed over his

obstinate resistance. Then it came to pass that, after the fashion of human nature, Thorstein exchanged profound apathy for exuberant zeal. He was in hot haste to show himself upon the sea, and impatiently hurried on the preparations for departure. The spring of 1005 saw everything in readiness, and Thorstein, with his wife, set sail for the country where Thorwald slept.

The god of adventure did not, however, extend to Thorstein and Gudrid the same favour as their forerunners had enjoyed. The season was already far advanced, mists had begun to overspread the ocean, and contrary winds blew fiercely. Thorstein and Gudrid, like Bjorn in earlier days, were wrapped in wreaths of dark vapour, but had not the good fortune that befel him when the fog lighted and he saw land ahead. They were tempest-tossed for a long time, then they were once more shrouded in mist and driven out of their course, and, at last, they were cast upon a point of the west coast of Greenland, far from the Cape of Crosses, and still farther from Vinland.

All their hopes were at an end, all their plans were frustrated; fate was against them. One piece of luck they had, however. They met a compatriot who had settled in that country. Asland Svart — Aslang the Black — offered them generous hospitality, which they were absolutely forced to accept,

for their wrecked ship, disabled and battered, was falling to pieces with every heave and stroke of the sea. Very soon only its skeleton remained, a plaything for the waves.

The dark days, the days of enforced leisure, were upon them once more, with distance, separation from friends, the grief and mortification of an abortive enterprise in addition. Gudrid was overwhelmed. It was her enterprise that had come to naught, and, in her despair, she laid her ill-fortune to the charge of the Scandinavian divinities and the God of the Christians. The terrified, bewildered crew wrung their hands and uttered lamentable cries. Thorstein only, who was naturally cool-headed, and possessed of the true courage that is tempered like steel to emit the spark at need, bore the fate which his wife's pertinacity had brought upon him, without a murmur or a reproach. But he very soon had to share the common misery; a calamity far more terrible than shipwreck was about to fall upon the ill-fated adventurers.

Already, in the course of the expedition, an epidemic had broken out suddenly on board, and some of the crew had died. The malady increased to a frightful extent when those who were contaminated were transferred to the land. The plague made hideous ravages in the ranks of the sailors, and then attacked the servants of Aslang the Black. This

created general terror. Some killed themselves to escape from so ghastly a mode of death. Others wildly fled, ridding themselves of their companions to avoid all infectious contact. At length the disease subsided, then disappeared, but it had shot a Parthian dart at the valiant Thorstein himself.

On learning this sad news, Aslang hastened to Gudrid's side.

"Weep not," said he; "your husband dwells, henceforth, with the blessed, and has no longer to dread earthly ills. When perpetual night shall give place to continuous day, and the gentle dew shall melt the great snowflakes, I will sell my goods and my flocks, we will charter a bark, place your husband's body in it, and so carry him back to Brattehild. I will accompany you, and take some attendants with us that your regrets may be allayed."

The *Chronicle* records that at this point Thorstein roused himself for a few moments from the darkness of death. He opened his eyes, and, fixing them on Gudrid, he said, in a clear, vibrating voice:

"It is you who are the cause of my miserable end, but I bear you no ill will for that. I was wrong to throw myself in the way of your life of adventure. You were not made for the peaceful existence of hearth and home. Danger and strife have irresistible attractions for you. Have patience, and your desires will be fulfilled, for on the way you

are going you will meet a valiant chief who shall lead you, sword in hand, through unexplored seas and lands. You shall witness bloody battles, and death will seem to you to be near, but its wing shall not touch you, and your soul, sanctified, shall shine, living, upon the earth."

Having thus spoken, the son of Erik fell back into the majesty of the eternal silence. Gudrid threw herself upon his body and bathed it with her tears.

Aslang the Black kept his promise, faithfully. When spring came, he sold his goods and his flocks, chartered a ship, placed Thorstein's remains on board, and, with a few followers, took Gudrid back to the court of Leif, where she was received with increased homage and respect on account of her recent misfortunes.

CHAPTER IX.

BIRD ISLAND.

Thorfinn, a Norwegian chief, marries Gudrid. — They depart with Freydize, a daughter of Erik, and land on an island near Vinland, in the spring of 1007. — Rivalry between Gudrid and Freydize. — Attempted poisoning. — The Bitter Runes. — Winter. — Want. — The flight of Thorhall the Hunter.

THE valiant chief, foretold by Thorstein, came. He arrived from Norway, the mother country of the pirates, in command of two ships in fighting trim. He wore the armour of Jarls of high lineage. He was noble, for his ancestors had a right to carry the royal crown. His name was Thorfinn Karlsefn, that is to say, "destined to glory."

After a cruise in the far northern regions he had steered for Greenland, having heard much of its prosperous trade, its social security, and the beauty of the landscape. Thorfinn very soon let it be seen that he was considerably disappointed in the latter particular, and Leif acknowledged frankly that his father had called the country Greenland because he calculated on inducing men to come thither more readily by giving it an attractive name.

They both laughed heartily at this trait of cunning of the North, made friends at once, and passed a pleasant time at Brattehild. Leif was afraid that he might not be able to do sufficient honour to his guest during the approaching Christmas festival, but Thorfinn begged him to make his mind easy.

"Is that all, comrade?" said he. "My ships are laden with victuals salted and smoked to perfection, with good store of fruit from Normandy, where grows the best of all, oils from a country whose skies and seas are always blue, and exquisite wines, grown on heights that bask in the sun in lands where cold weather is unknown, where water never is frozen hard enough to bear an insect, where the only snow that is ever seen falls in the spring only, from the tree tops, perfumed, light as down, and so soft and warm that one lends one's cheek to its touch as to a kiss."

"I have heard tell of these countries," said Leif. "I have known sailors who talked of sky that is always azure, trees that are always green, and fruits like purest gold. But I should astonish you not a little, friend, were I to tell you that we, too, have, and not far from here, blue air, leaves which do not wither, and luscious products of happy flowers. This wine, which is somewhat to your taste, is grown in our colony, our Greenland beyond seas, our Vinland — it is I who gave it that name."

"Ha! My comrade, halt you there! I hold you for the honestest lord in all the land, but you, your own self, have told me how Greenland came to be Greenland. Like father like son!"

"You may mock me, guest of mine, if you will. I appeal to our companions here present. Is it not true, comrades, that we have discovered a region more rich, splendid, and sun blest than all those Jarl Thorfinn describes to us?"

"Yes, yes," was the unanimous response. And Aulaf, the Skald, tuning his lute, sang the praises and the felicity of Vinland. After a pause Leif resumed:

"Hearken! You know that the custom with us Norsemen is not to indicate the places whence we draw our wealth. For you, however, I will make an exception. You are brave, you are enterprising, you care for fame and glory. If you will, the destinies of Vinland shall be entrusted to you. No firmer or more loyal hands could be found to guide them, and, if you accept, my old companions will gladly serve under your banner: they know the value of the country."

Leif continued to expatiate on this theme, and, as his discourse proceeded, Thorfinn yielded to the influence of his persuasive eloquence, and was drawn towards this marvellous adventure, far removed as it was from any project of his own. And, indeed, it

surpassed in suddeness and the unforeseen anything that had ever presented itself to his imagination in its most fantastic flight.

He was won over to the cause, yet, contrary to Leif's expectation, he did not display any great enthusiasm just at first, but cast anxious glances at Gudrid. Notwithstanding her noble presence and her renown, Thorstein's widow had not assumed any precedence, but yielded the place of honour to Freydize, daughter of Erik the Red and sister of the three heroes whose names were associated with the discovery of Vinland.

Both Freydize and Aulaf detected Thorfinn's look. In the former it inspired profound jealousy ; but the Skald, seizing on the propitious moment, declaimed the hymn of the Virgins, and followed it up by an improvised recital in harmonious verse of Thorstein's campaign and his death. When he came to the dying vision of the illustrious, shipwrecked chief, and his prediction to his weeping wife that she should meet upon her way a valiant chief who would conduct her with drawn sword across seas and into lands unexplored, Thorfinn rose, and approaching Gudrid he took her by the hand.

Then turning to Leif he said :

"Chief, your offer has strongly stirred my soul. Yes, I desire to go to Vinland, there to form a powerful colony, to extend the field of my conquest,

but on condition that I nail the blue shield of Thorstein's heroic widow to my mainmast."

The gaze of all present was fixed on Gudrid. She rose, raised her clear eyes to Thorfinn's, and said simply:

"I was waiting for you! Let us go!"

From that moment the scene was one of continual rejoicing. The Christmas festival days were kept with profuse banquets and libations. Thorfinn's two ships and the reserve stores of Brattehild were heavily taxed for provisions, and afterwards the community had to put itself on an allowance, seeing that five long months must elapse before the wedding voyage of the gallant captain and his no less gallant wife. At length, in the spring of 1007, the fleet set sail.

The flag-ship, commanded by Thorfinn, had Gudrid's blue buckler nailed to its mainmast, as its master had desired. The second ship, intended to lead the way, was commanded by Bjorn Herwolfson, who had shaken off his torpor, and taken service under the flag of the bold Norwegian. A large bark came next, commanded by Freydize herself, for Leif's sister did not choose to let Vinland go into strange hands. The Princess, whose heart was full of envy, had accepted, nay, she had even solicited, the second rank, with a firm intention of not recoiling from any means of acquiring the first.

GUDRID ACCEPTING THE HAND OF THORFINN.

The daughter of Erik the Red took with her Thorvar, her husband, a weak person, entirely governed by his wife, and a Norwegian adventurer, Thorhall the Hunter, who had been forced upon him by Freydize. This man was the real master of the vessel; he bullied the men, and constantly turned his covetous eyes on Thorfinn's ship. When Freydize caught that look of his, she would approach Thorhall and silently grasp his hand.

Aulaf the Skald, the authorised bard of Vinland, accompanied the expedition as a matter of course, and the majority of Leif's former champions formed part of it. Their wives went with them. The enterprise was important and onerous. The ships carried all sorts of domestic animals, implements and provisions, and also everything that was necessary for a permanent colony. This time it was the explorers' purpose to install themselves properly in their possessions beyond seas, and to settle down in the strange land "for good and all."

Bjorn found Helluland again without any trouble. The place was then overrun with foxes, and the collections destined for sale were begun with the fur of those animals.

Thorfinn did not stop at this kind of hunting, profitable as it was; he went on to Markland, and then to an island, which received the name of *Bjarnar* or Bear Island, in commemoration of a hunter

having been killed by a bear on it. Careen Cape was also recognised, but the pilgrimage to Thorwald's grave was postponed to a future occasion.

Thorfinn, who ardently desired to associate his name with fresh discoveries before setting foot in Vinland, then sailed along a vast extent of desert territory, and to this he gave the, no doubt,* derisive name of *Coast Marvellous.* He also explored several gulfs, † and named a very large one among the number *Straun-Fjord* ‡ or *Bay of the Currents.* In this bay there was an island so thickly peopled by the valuable eider-duck that not a step could be taken without breaking its eggs. The strange intruders on this feathered world called its home *Bird Island.* Thorfinn resolved to make a pause here, so warm and pleasant was the climate, and sent two sailors on shore to reconnoitre. The men returned on the third evening, bringing with them bunches of grapes and some wild barley.

Then the Normans disembarked their flocks and built huts at a short distance from the beach.

The pleasant days were divided between the labours of tillage, fishing — with abundant results — and explorations in the interior of the island, the

* Also, no doubt, in playful remembrance of Leif's confidence in the matter of the naming of Greenland.

† This is now Nauset, Chatham and Monomy Bay.

‡ Buzzards Bay; where the Gulf Stream produces very irregular currents.

women remaining at home to attend to household affairs, with the exception of Gudrid and Freydize, who joined in all the fishing and exploring excursions.

The two women had been alienated from each other by a secret rivalry from the beginning, and this now became evident. The daughter of Erik could not endure the predominance of a stranger, who reigned as sovereign mistress, and whom Thorfinn's companions regarded as the real head of the expedition. Gudrid, on her side, was by no means disposed to resign her high authority, even for the benefit of her former sister-in-law. She was, however, of a conciliating disposition, notwithstanding her warlike instincts, and she endeavoured to keep up an appearance of harmony with her rival.

Freydize, however, would not consent to such a truce. She was backed in her enmity to Gudrid by Thorhall the Hunter, who was aiming more and more directly at the mastery of the expedition. He, like his accomplice, was resolved that no obstacle should turn him from the attainment of his end. His programme was clear and simple; he would get rid of each chief, one after the other. And as Gudrid was the queen, the soul of the expedition, he would begin with her.

Thorfinn's wife fell sick suddenly. The malady, to which no name could be assigned, was regarded as incurable from the first. A strange languor had

taken possession of her whole being; her muscles of steel seemed to give way under some destructive action. Her arm, which had so bravely wielded axe and sword, hung helpless by her side; her clear, bright intelligence was obscured; her speech was arrested on her faded lips; her fixed eyes shone with a feverish light; everything around her was changed with that mysterious fluid which is like the escape of a soul. In short, Gudrid was dying, and grief reigned among the colonists of Bird Island.

Now, it came to pass that Aulaf, coming by Thorwald's huts, heard the sound of talking, and listening he recognised the voices of Thorhall and Freydize. The daughter of Erik was complaining that her rival was so slow about dying, and Thorhall the Hunter was exhorting her to patience. He had cast *Bitter Runes* for the sick woman, and, as he thoroughly understood the art of tracing mysterious characters, he was certain he had not been mistaken. It was only a matter of time; Gudrid would not last much longer.

This revelation was a flash of light to Aulaf. He, also, as poet and *savant*, was learned in the cabalistic lore of the figures and signs which dispense good and evil. He had on several occasions employed *Magic Runes*, which magicians used in their enchantments; *Helpful Runes*, to avert accidents; *Victorious Runes*, which procure success in war; *Bitter*

Runes, made to harm, had never soiled the point of his stylus, but he knew how to fight them with *Medicinal Runes*, and to this knowledge Aulaf added, no doubt, experience in the use of simples and the practice of counter-poisons.

Armed with his important discovery, the bard hastened to Thorfinn's dwelling and announced that he was certain he could cure Gudrid.

"If you do that," exclaimed Thorfinn, clasping him in his arms, "my fortune, my fame, my life are all yours."

Then the Skald directed her attendants to lift Gudrid from her bed, and change her clothes. This done, he searched the invalid's bed, and found in it certain *Runes* traced on fish gills. He read these, threw them into the fire, and caused the bed coverings to be exposed to the air. He did not wish to injure Thorhall the Hunter, although he intended to watch him closely, and so he contented himself with making the following declaration :

"Let none take upon himself to trace *Runes* unless he knows how to arrange them, for it has happened to several to make mistakes in the form of different letters. I have seen ten occult letters cut out on fish gills, which have brought a terrible sickness upon our queen. But, by the grace of our protecting gods, she will soon be restored to health."

Aulaf, having spoken, traced other *Runes*, and

directed that Gudrid should be taken back to her bed. He then placed his own writings under her pillow, and Thorfinn's wife came out of her torpor immediately, stretched her limbs lazily, and said she was no longer sick.

Those present raised the cry of "miracle."

Aulaf was carried in triumph, and regarded as the tutelary angel of the expedition. Thorfinn, calling him his friend, his brother, insisted on consecrating the bond of union after the Scandinavian manner, by a sort of transfusion or mixing of his blood with that of Gudrid's preserver.

When the rumour of this marvellous cure reached Freydize, whose dwelling was at some distance from that of Thorfinn's companions, so that she was not obliged to keep up any constant intercourse with them, it made Leif's sister excessively angry. She let Thorhall the Hunter feel the full weight of her wrath; the latter, who was a "practising" pagan, regarded this unlooked-for incident as a proof of the divine disapprobation, and, bowing to the decree of destiny, he renounced his design of extermination, while promising himself at the same time to make a fresh venture at a favourable opportunity.

Such an occasion arose before long. After the summer, which had, indeed, been but an extended spring, winter set in with severity, which Thorfinn and his people had not been led to expect by Leif

and his companions. But the fact is that Bird Island, although in its neighbourhood, was not the mild land of wine itself, and at the present time a considerable difference of temperature exists between the island known as Martha's Vineyard, where Thorfinn's colony appears to have been established, and the coasts of Massachusetts and Connecticut. Bjorn Jousson, a very ancient geographer, says that "all the zone of the inhabited island of Massachusetts is very cold!" and he adds, "nevertheless, the good Vinland, which, according to some *is connected with Africa*, is not far off." The warm climate of Leifs-Budir and its surroundings had given rise to this belief.

The hard winter had come upon the little colony suddenly, and was unexpected, so that no provision had been made for its exigencies. Fishing and hunting became unprofitable toil in the cold weather; the fishes resorted to undiscoverable retreats, and the game retired to the depths of the woods, whither it would have been impossible to follow them. Very soon it became a case of serving out rations to the community, and then came dearth. One day, some harpooners captured a whale, boiled and ate a piece of its flesh, and were attacked with illness after that experiment. Then Thorhall spoke to them as follows:

"The best thing you can do is to throw this whale's flesh into the water, and entrust yourselves

to the gods. Come with me, and you shall soon have plenty of victuals, for there is game in the woods of the country whither I want to lead you, and fish in the sea, and there are eggs in the rocks. But do not repeat a word of what I say to any one."

The harpooners, all resolute men, and pressed by hunger, received the hunter's proposal with eagerness, and as it was useless to prolong a period of misery and privation, they arranged with Thorhall to meet him on the following night on the beach, near the bay in which the three ships lay at anchor. To seize upon Thorfinn's vessels was out of the question, but Thorhall answered for the third, the Princess Freydize's bark, which was under his charge. The little band might approach it noiselessly, and they would set sail at once for the land of plenty.

When the evening came, Thorhall the Hunter, without taking leave of any one, carried water to the ship which he already regarded as his own, drank, and sang:

"Let us return to the country of the ancestors.
Let us spread our sails, and let our ship glide swiftly past these sandy shores.
Let the men whose swords brave the tempest, and who deny their ancient gods, remain here on land, and boil whale's flesh.
We, we hunger for game, and thirst for foaming beer."

On the conclusion of this chant Thorhall sailed

for Norway, the country to which it alluded. In his excursions round the island, and inland, the hunter had discovered currents which would carry him thither in a direct course. And, in fact, the ship, after some tacking, was swiftly impelled by a fair, west wind, towards the European coast.

Six hundred years later, a certain French officer, the Marquis de la Roche, had a similar experience. While seeking a port for his small ship, in the neighbourhood of Sand Island, he was caught by a west wind, and carried, in less than ten or twelve days, within sight of the coast of France.

Thorhall was not so fortunate. Instead of regaining the land of his birth, he was cast on the Irish coast, and reduced to slavery with his companions. Such was the fate of all mariners who were wrecked on the inhospitable shores of Green Erin.

CHAPTER X.

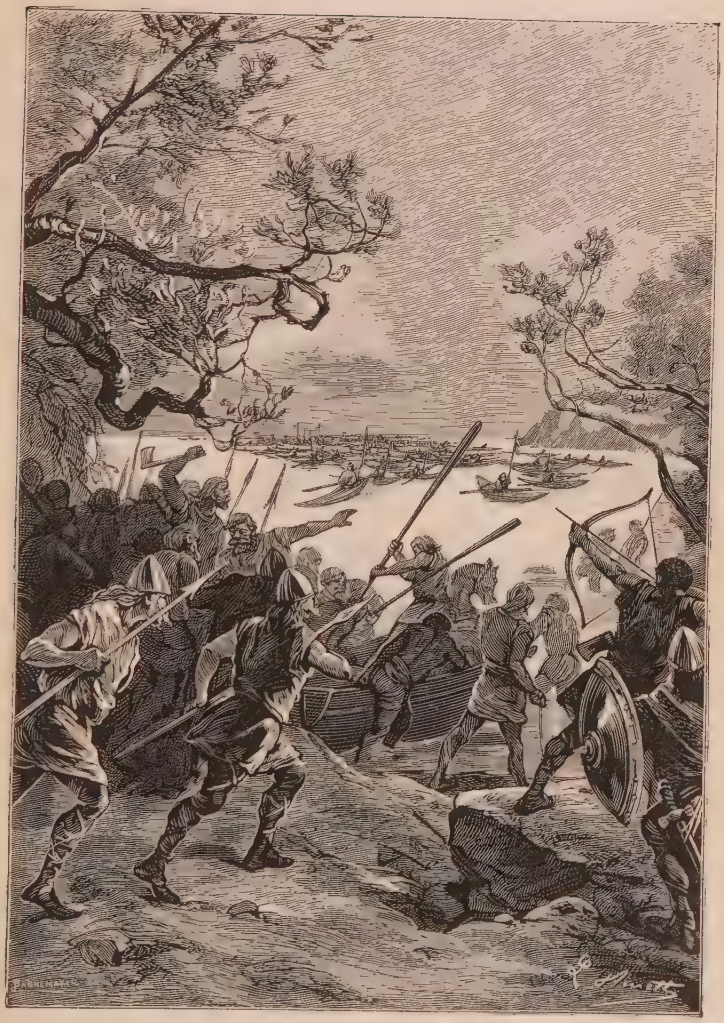
THE SKRELLINGS.

The Colony of Thorfinns-Budir. — The Queen of the Eskimo. — A Sanguinary Fight. — Mirage. — Freydize. — The Two Queens. — Three Years in Vinland. — Gudrid at Rome.

Cold, hunger, and privations of every sort had considerably reduced the number of followers of Karlsefu and Bjorn. Nevertheless, they reached Vinland with more than a hundred companions, who were soon restored to health and strength by a hearty welcome and good treatment.

Thorfinn, whose predominant desire it was to create and to inaugurate, did not remain at Leifs-Budir. He went up the river and settled on the other bank, in the proximity of a lake surrounded by forests. In a short time, a little town arose in that place, and Thorfinn, following the example of the son of Erik the Red, gave it his own name.

Thorfinns-Budir rapidly outstripped the older settlement, but friendly relations between the two were uninterruptedly maintained. They exchanged



THE ATTACK BY THE SKRELLINGS.

their products, lent each other aid on all occasions, and conducted expeditions in common.

Now it happened on a day when almost all the people were absent, that the lake was suddenly covered with canoes paddled by *Skrellings*. The women, who had remained at home, were much alarmed, and fled, screaming so loudly that their cries were heard by some fishermen who were letting down their nets in the river. The fishermen promptly gathered together such of the men as were felling trees or hunting game in the vicinity, and when the company was complete, they hastened to the lake, where they arrived just in time to prevent the *Skrellings* from landing.

Each side remained on its guard, and thus an affray was avoided. Thorfinn and Gudrid, who had arrived at the same moment, approved of the conduct of the colonists, notwithstanding the protest of Freydize. Thorwald's sister strongly urged that the death of the hero of Krossanes should be avenged on the spot.

She pointed disdainfully with her finger to the swarm of Eskimo — not very formidable their numbers, notwithstanding, for they appeared to have none but peaceful intentions — who were still shaking the sticks with skins attached to them, which they used as banners of a rude sort. What could this friendly attitude be, she asked, but a feint? If

an end were not made of these savages at once, they would return treacherously, under cover of night, or otherwise, and the former disaster would be repeated, only this time all the Norsemen would be massacred.

The eloquence of Freydize had won the approbation of some of the bystanders, and Thorfinn himself was affected by it. He would not, however, come to any decision without the concurrence of his wife.

"What do you think of this?" he asked Gudrid, after he had repeated the arguments used by Freydize.

The bystanders drew near to the speaker and his wife. They were waiting anxiously for the decision of her whom they regarded as their true chief, and her reply surprised them not a little.

"I think," she said, "these people are making signs of friendship to us, and that we ought to meet their advances by hoisting the white flag."

At these words, Freydize started up in protest, but Thorfinn imposed silence upon her, and again addressed Gudrid.

"No doubt humanity and commiseration speak by your lips," he said, "and your reasons are dictated by the purity of your soul. Remember, however, the event of the Cape of the Crosses. Did not Thorstein, on your advice, undertake the expedition in which he, unhappily, ended his days, and

was not its object, in your mind, the avenging of his brother?"

"That unhappy event to which you allude has made me reflect. I have put the question to myself whether the death of my husband was not permitted by God to prevent that deed of vengeance by recalling us to equity, even more than to pity. Thorstein himself, when the Angel of Death withdrew from his bed to allow him to tell what he was in the eternal kingdom, did not speak of reprisals. His mind had turned to more tender, more Christian feelings. He predicted to me my own destiny, even as the Lord has been pleased to mark its beginning. He has sent me the valiant chief who is to conduct me through life. His arm is sure, and his sword uplifted. Therefore, I bow before you, Thorfinn, and I say, 'Whatsoever you shall do will be well done.'"

"You think, then, we ought to pardon these wretched creatures?"

"They have no part in the matter, and besides they will be too numerous — to-morrow — for us to risk making enemies of them to-day. Believe me, Thorfinn, it is better for us to live on good terms with them. Our safety and our commerce also will gain by that course."

The admiral could not repress a look and gesture of vexation, but withheld any expression of his feelings.

"Let it be as you wish," said he, "and may our gods and the Christ protect us."

Then he instantly gave orders for the hoisting of the white flag.

Freydize, livid with rage, was like a fury.

"Traitor! coward!" she cried, "you are our enemy; you desire our death! Your wife governs you, she leads you like an infant. You are a degenerate son of the old sea-kings."

"I do not lead my husband; I do not govern in his name; I know my place and keep it," said Gudrid, interposing. "The man who abases himself, who trembles before his wife, is a coward; but Thorfinn is none. He leaves such baseness to him whose name your people pronounce with scorn."

Freydize was about to reply, but Thorfinn once more constrained her to silence. In the meantime the *Skrellings* had approached, and were observing the strangers with curiosity, but they did not disembark. To the great surprise of the Norsemen, they put about, after they had consulted together, and the fleet of canoes disappeared behind a promontory. Search was immediately made for them in the direction they had taken, but without result. Thorfinn pushed far on to the North and even founded a settlement, but this he abandoned in a short time on ascertaining that its products did not differ from those of Thorfinns-Budir. He found no trace what-

ever of the presence of *Skrellings*. The country had never been inhabited by human beings; the grass had grown skywards, and the birds, knowing no fear of the arrow, alighted fearlessly and familiarly on the men's shoulders. However, nothing was lost by waiting. One fine morning the canoes reappeared on the lake in great numbers, and this time the *Skrellings* did come ashore. They brought with them a great quantity of fur skins of extremely fine quality. These were none other than the much-prized minever. They only demanded in exchange strips of red stuff, to be worn as head-ornaments, but they would also have liked some spears and swords. Thorfinn forbade his people to give them away. When the store of red stuff was exhausted, resort was had to frippery of other kinds, but nothing could be found that would please these strange creatures. At last, when the Norsemen were at their wits' end for some means of cementing relations that seemed likely to fall asunder, it occurred to Gudrid to offer milk-porridge prepared by herself to some of the savages. The dainty dish threw them into such ecstasies that they refused to take any other payment.

"They carried away in their stomachs," says the *Saga*, "the price of the precious merchandise which the Scandinavians carefully put aside to freight their ships withal."

Excellent relations were then established between the Norsemen and the *Skrellings*. Thorfinn, however, surrounded his settlement with palisades as a measure of prudent precaution, and found that he had done well and wisely, for an incident soon occurred which suddenly changed the disposition of the Eskimo towards him. On their arrival one morning, as usual, at porridge time, a bull, having escaped from its yard, charged the party, and injured several of them. They were very much frightened, and fled to the houses for refuge. Thorfinn, fearing that they had come to seize upon the coveted spears and swords, had the doors secured against them. Then the Eskimo became convinced that the affair of the bull was an aggression, a deliberate attempt upon their lives, and they fled, with threats.

For three weeks their hideous faces were no more seen in the misty mornings, and the Norsemen began to think that nothing worse than a "strike" in minever was to be feared, when one fine day back came the *Skrellings* in greater numbers than ever before. They were very quiet, and brought armfuls of merchandise as usual; but Thorfinn, who was always on his guard, was apprehensive of some hostile project on their part. He said to the women:

"Serve the soup they like so much, but nothing more."

This was done, but, to the great surprise of the

colonists, the *Skrellings*, who had hitherto highly relished their morning meal, turned away from it in scorn, and, without a gesture or a word, tossed their bales over the palisade. This produced a confusion of which they took advantage. Thorfinn was right; their object was to lay hold of the arms, for recent incidents had roused their ire, and in their warlike ardour they were eager to come to blows with the proprietors of the irascible bull that had caused them such alarm.

At this moment, Gudrid, who had recently given birth to her first child, was in her house, suspecting nothing of the danger that threatened her. She was spinning the hemp of a first crop, and singing with her companions an old song of Norway.

The noise out-of-doors continuing, she sent her women to see what was going on, and remained alone, gazing on the sweet face of her infant.

Suddenly she was startled by an extraordinary apparition in the doorway. There stood a little black-skinned woman; her clothes — if the name could be given to the rags she wore — were as black as her skin, her head was bound with strips of red stuff, she had dirty gray hair, livid lips, and languid, staring eyes; yet, notwithstanding all this, she was handsome, after a hideous fashion.

Gudrid was stupefied for a few moments, but then recovered herself, and being, as we know, "skilful

in the art of conversing with strangers," she questioned this old woman who seemed to have escaped from a witches' "Sabbath."

She was called Gudrid, like her questioner, and like her lived an adventurous life.

Gudrid made the woman take a seat, and would have applied herself to soothe and make terms with her, in the hope that an era of peace and prosperity might ensue, from harmony between the two; but at that moment a terrible crash shook the house, a cry unlike any sound produced by a human being rent the air, and a repulsive, hairy creature, streaming with blood, rushed in, and tumbled down like a log between the two women. Gudrid the Norsewoman recoiled in horror. Gudrid the Eskimo rose slowly, with frightful calmness, her eyes fixed, lost in a scornful contemplation, and without a word or a gesture, withdrew and disappeared.

Thorfinn now came upon the scene, and found no words to say, on beholding the corpse that polluted his dwelling, beyond:

"They wanted to get the arms."

But time pressed.

"We must agree upon what is to be done," said Thorfinn, "for I foresee that the *Skrellings* will come back in three-fold numbers to attack us. Ten of us must occupy this tongue of land and show ourselves to the enemy; the others must go into

the forest to open a passage for the cattle; when the *Skrellings* arrive the bull shall be let loose upon them."

The *Skrellings* did come back, and, as Thorfinn had foreseen, as compact as a swarm of hornets. They did not allow themselves to be intimidated by the bull, but boldly raised their war-cry, and sent a shower of arrows among the Norsemen, to set the battle going. Others used slings, and very cleverly directed a hail of stones against the wooden houses, which went to pieces under the assault. But they did better still! Out of the forest, where they had it hidden, the little hairy warriors brought a complicated machine, something like the ancient war-engine called a ballista, which enabled them to fling not merely big stones, but actual monoliths into the half ruined village.

In the meantime, Thorfinn had rallied his men, and hoisted the red shield, the symbol of battle. The formidable number of their adversaries intimidated even the bravest of the band; they recoiled before the destructive engine of the *Skrellings*, and were already on the point of flight when what was their terror on perceiving in the morning mist, and half way up the hill, a second army similar to the one before them. A wild panic seized upon their ranks. In vain did their chiefs, with Gudrid at their head, holding her new-born child to her breast with one

arm, and brandishing a sword with the other, strive to oppose their flight: they ran without looking whither they went, for they believed themselves to be surrounded, and saw enemies everywhere. The women uttered shrieks of terror, the bewildered children were lost in the stampede, and crushed under flying feet, and Thorfinn, with his supporters, notwithstanding their heroic efforts, was dragged into the fantastic and indescribable disarray. Of a sudden a woman appeared, her breast heaving, her hair loose in the wind, her eyes flashing.

This woman was Freydize.

"Cowards! Cowards!" she cried. "Cowards, who call yourselves brave men, and fly before these dwarfs whom you could kill like rats. Ah, if I had arms, I would show you how to get rid of them."

The flying rabble did not listen to her. She followed them, still pouring out scathing invectives. In the wood she found the corpse of one of her own people, who had been killed by a stone. Then she laid hands on the sword of the dead man, and rushed into the front, facing the advance of the *Skrellings*.

At their head marched that other Gudrid, the little old woman, still more handsome and more hideous in the stress of conflict. The eyes of the two women met, darting lightning glances at each other. Freydize was fascinated, rooted to the spot by the magnetic gaze of her adversary; her heart

beat violently, her temples throbbed to the point of agony, the rush of waters was in her ears, and her eyes grew dim. A stone was flung at her and whizzed close to her hair. Instantly, she recovered herself, her spirit rose, she fell like a thunderbolt upon the Queen of the *Skrellings*, and cleft her head from crown to chin with one stroke of her sword.

Thorfinn and Gudrid, with a few of their people, had hastened to join her, and, at sight of them, the savages were struck with fear. Their ranks fell into disorder; they, in their turn, were seized with panic, and fled, tumbling over one another, like sheep chased by a wolf.

The Norsemen did not pursue them, for they knew they would also have to deal with a body of enemies coming down from the height. They turned to face these, but, to their great surprise, the mist half-way up had vanished, and with it the *Skrellings*. So far as the eye could see no trace of them was to be found. The warriors gazed around them in blank astonishment; they were absolutely certain that a few moments previously the hill had been swarming with enemies. Then, Bjorn, to whom the phenomenon of mirage was familiar, bared his head, and said, solemnly:

"Morgan the Fay protect us: God is with us."

It was, indeed, by an optical phenomenon of frequent occurrence in those latitudes, that the Norse-

men had been led to believe themselves threatened by a whole army, which was, in reality, only the reflection of the foe in front of them. Now, they had nothing more to fear from the *Skrellings;* the latter evinced no inclination to renew their attack. But, on the other hand, those fine furs, which were so highly appreciated in Europe, also disappeared with the enemy. The source of the supply had failed definitely; thenceforth the colonists must seek another place of abode.

Thorfinn understood this at once. He rallied his people, even those who had fled to a great distance, including Thorvar, the husband of Freydize, who was found crouching in a tree top, and the very same day he set sail to return to "the good wine land."

The Norsemen remained there three years, and during that time Gudrid bore to Thorfinn a second son, who received the name of Suorr. Then they returned to the Straum-Fjord, where they settled, not on Bird Island, but on the mainland, where they might pass the winter, well provided with victuals this time. Afterwards, Karlsefu went in search of fresh adventures, taking only thirty men with him. He passed two months in exploring coasts, examining harbours, and inquiring minutely into the products of each region. It seems certain that he ascended the Potomac, where, as we shall see, the Scandinavians founded a colony at a later date. Then he pro-

"HE ANCHORED AT THE MOUTH OF A RIVER."

ceeded northward with a notion that he might meet with Thorhall the Hunter. On his passage he sighted Careen Cape, and, making a cast to the west, he anchored at the mouth of a river which might have been placed there expressly to receive him, and whose banks were lined by vast forests with occasional openings in their leafy depths.

On his return to the Straum-Fjord, Thorfinn found a revolution in full swing. Gudrid and Freydize had quarrelled openly, and two camps had been formed; one in favour of the queen of the expedition, the other for the heroine of the battle with the *Skrellings*. Fights and squabbles had taken place. Thorfinn restored order at once, but he thought the time had come for him to betake himself to the way "home." And, as he feared neither fog nor tempest, he took to the sea, as Thorhall had done, but with better fortune, for he reached the coast of Norway towards the autumn of the year 1011.

The riches with which his ship was laden made a sensation at the Scandinavian Court. Olaf the Holy, who had succeeded Olaf Trygvason, was equally astonished and delighted to learn that he possessed a new colony, abounding in wine, precious woods, and furs. And, in fact, so fertile had this source of revenue proved, that the sale of his ship's cargo realised a fortune for Thorfinn.

He retired to Iceland, and there passed the re-

mainder of his life in the peaceful condition of a man who has done enough for his glory and his repose.

At his death, Gudrid administered his property. When both her sons married she went on pilgrimage to Rome. Then she retired to a convent which had been built at her expense near Brattehild, where, according to Thorstein's prediction, she lived, as a nun, like a saint on earth.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DIGHTON ROCK.

An inscription recording the following events and confirming the *Saga*.

We have said that the dead have spoken and the stones likewise. The speaking dead are, first, Thorwald, at the Cape of the Crosses, and secondly, a warrior found near Thorfinns-Budir, under similar circumstances. The vocal stones are an inscription, a sign, a figure, here and there. All these are of considerable historic interest; but none offer proof so complete as that furnished by the rock on the right bank of the Cohannet, or Taunton River, in the County of Bristol, Massachusetts, in 41° 45′ 30″ of North latitude, a little below Thorfinns-Budir.

The Dighton Rock, so called because visitors habitually come to visit it from the town of that name, is a block of gneiss, four yards wide, one yard and three-quarters high, of almost pyramidal shape, facing the northwest, and, when seen from the river, sloping forward. This rock, visible from a considerable distance, is of a peculiar colour, being purple at the top, reddish in the middle, and green

at the base. No doubt it was on account of its singularity that Thorfinn and his companions selected it to bear upon its indestructible surface the record of their sojourn.

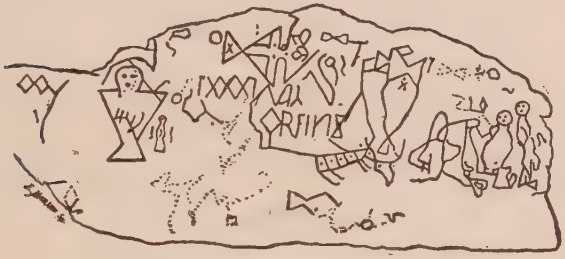
What the visitor sees are strange characters, mixed up with figures still more strange ; the whole cut to the depth of one-third of an inch. The discovery of this rock, in 1680, created a sensation among the *savants* in Europe, but no trace of any known hieroglyphic language was discovered in the reproductions that were made. That the inscription did not belong to an aboriginal race was proved by certain details, and especially by very distinct Roman numerals. At length, on being submitted to Danish archæologists, the inscription yielded up its secret.

The characters are Scandinavian *runes*, mixed with Roman numerals, and they form the following clear and precise sentence :

"CXXXI *men of the North occupied this country with Thorfinn.*"

There are also the bucklers of peace and of war mentioned in the *Saga*, and an upturned helmet, a symbol of the pacific occupation of the country. Thorfinn's ship, Gudrid, who holds the key of her house in her hand, and her son Suorr (the latter indicated by the *rune* corresponding to our S, the initial of his name), are plainly to be made out. The

cock crows the pæan of peace ; but Thorfinn defends himself with his shield against the attacks of the *Skrellings*, whose bows and other arms and projectiles are accurately represented. Among these is the stone ball which they flung at the Norsemen from the archaic catapult before mentioned. A little animal in a corner may fairly pass for the bull of the



Saga. In short, the whole story is there without an omission.

Beyond all doubt, Thorwald desired to leave an indelible trace of his sojourn in Vinland before he returned to his own country, and he fully succeeded in doing this, for his *runes* come down to us, in our day, as the seal, the living mark set to the tradition of the occupation of America by the Norsemen, that henceforward can never be disputed.

With Thorfinn, the land of sunset, "beyond the seas," was only at its beginning. We are now about to follow the course of its development, resuming our narrative at the point where we diverged from it.

CHAPTER XII.

THE END OF A HERO.

Death of Bjorn Herwolfson, to whom was given the first glimpse of the American coast.

Bjorn Herwolfson followed close upon Thorfinn and Gudrid; but as his ship had sustained serious damage in his toilsome expeditions, and as the number of the Vinlanders who wished to revisit Greenland was considerable, he had a barque built and coated with seal-grease, which he commanded himself. He then handed over his former *drakar* to the most experienced of his crew, directing him to sail in close company with the barque, keeping always within hail, and on the course which he should indicate.

Haki Grimolfson promised to follow Bjorn's instructions. His vessel sailed duly in the track of the flag-ship; but it retarded the speed of the latter for the *drakar* was no longer buoyant on the waves. In vain did Bjorn signal to Haki to advance, to put on press of sail. The once light and elegant vessel, a "skimmer of the seas," seemed to be sinking

where she lay. Then Bjorn, in his impatience, boarded Haki's vessel, and on making a careful inspection he became too well aware that she had sprung several leaks, and that her hull was completely worm-eaten. It was infested by the ship-worm * which attacks and bores innumerable winding tunnels in the hardest wood. While the ship was laid up, this multitudinous world of insects had restricted itself to a discreet nibbling, but once at sea, that was changed to fury, to carnage. The cutting edges of the little shell which serves these creatures for jaws never left off gnawing, and the *drakar* was speedily reduced to the condition of a sponge.

Then Haki said to Bjorn:

"You see, you have given us a rotten ship which will soon go down under the waves, and my companions, although they are accustomed to stake their lives day after day, on the sea or in combat, are moved at the thought that they have now to learn whether they must perish with the ship which is sinking beneath their feet, or retain any hope of reaching land again."

"I understand you," replied Bjorn, "but I can do nothing. I did not know my ship was in such a state. The barque which I command is safe from harmful insects, but it is not large enough to hold us all.

*Teredo, or boring worm.

We shall therefore draw lots, chiefs, and men at arms, and seamen, and destiny will point out those who are to take their place in the ship of safety."

Consent was given to this with one accord, and as there was no time for delay, the vessel being on the point of sinking, the lots were drawn on the spot. Bjorn's name was among the first. He silently thanked Providence for this fortunate chance, and was about to return to his ship with the other favoured ones, on the termination of the drawing, when a Norwegian sailor stopped the way.

"Bjorn, are you going to leave me here?" said he.

"You see, it is impossible for me to do otherwise," replied the son of Herwolf.

"This is not what you promised me when I left my father's house with you."

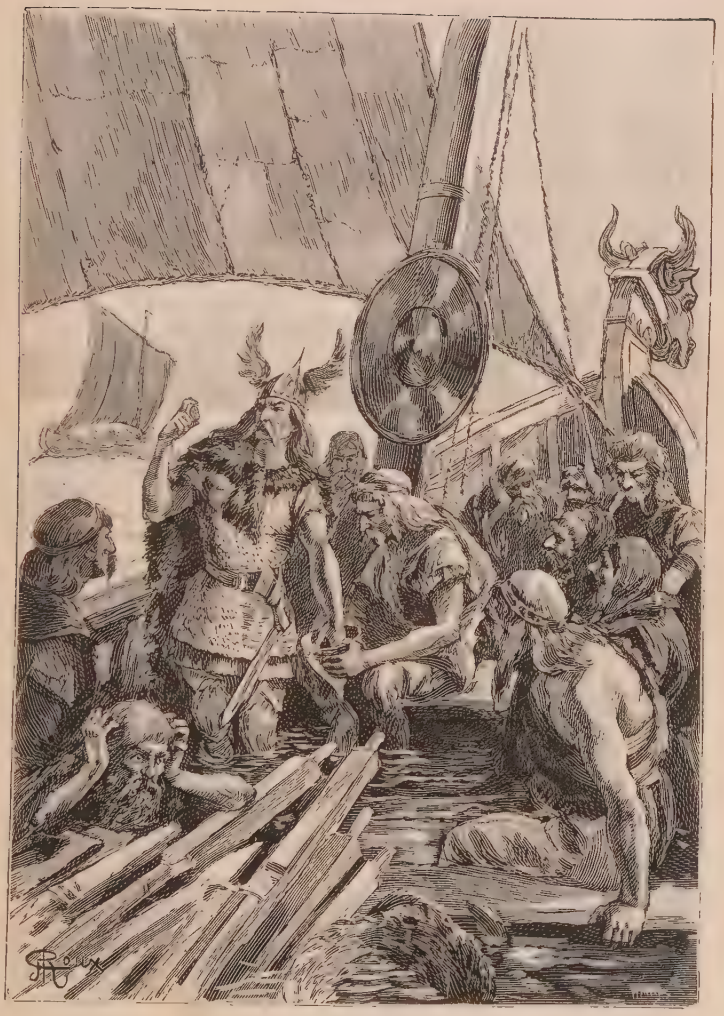
"That is true, but I do not see how I am to remedy the fatality that has come upon you."

"I do, though. I know a means of averting it."

"Speak quickly, my friend. Whatever your idea may be, I agree to it beforehand, if it is in my power to realise it."

"Nothing is more simple: take my place, and I will take yours."

At these words, Bjorn bent his head in serious thought. This man was right. When he persuaded him to leave his country and his home, he had prom-



"AS THERE WAS NO TIME FOR DELAY . . . THE LOTS WERE DRAWN ON THE SPOT."

ised him fortune, and, failing that, protection and the safety of his life. The moment had come for the fulfilment of that promise. The man's demand was just, and so Bjorn would take his place. At that moment a thousand recollections rushed upon him, he passed in swift review his discoveries, his distant expeditions, and weighed the worth of the alternate glory and repose that he had won by them. Once more he was carried suddenly out of the fog which shrouded his ship to the miraculous apparition of the unexplored coast; then came the wrath of Erik, pursuing and constraining him in all his voyages and conflicts, his meeting with Leif on the quay at Trondjem, the royal vessel of gold and purple sailing swiftly towards Brattehild; lastly, the lovely, enchanting land of Vine, with its trees always green, its breezes always gentle, its eternal spring. And Bjorn smiled at these phantoms of a happy time, but, swiftly returning to the stern reality he had to face, he shook off his reverie, looked up, and said, in a firm voice:

"Let it be as you desire, comrade, I see that you cling to life, and are frightened by the approach of death. I have fulfilled the cycle of my destiny. God has made this known to me by your mouth. Go. I remain."

And he remained.

The barque, secured by its coating of seal-grease, and commanded by Haki, sailed off, and was soon

out of sight of the old ship that was settling more and more deeply every moment. The hold was full of water, and when the flood overflowed the deck, the vessel sank suddenly; then the foaming waves spread a vast pall over Bjorn Herwolfson, the glorious son of the sea, he to whom had been given the first glimpse of the great Continent of the West, the shores of the New World.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE QUEEN OF VINLAND.

In the meantime, Vinland was beginning to be known. Notwithstanding the severity of the Scandinavian law, which punished with death all indiscretions relative to lands discovered and cultivated by the men of the North, the number of seamen who had sailed in the "vernal regions," where the sun set beyond the seas, was becoming so considerable that the secret of the already flourishing colony could not be kept for any length of time.

Norway, the mother country, was anxious, and with reason, about those transatlantic regions which she regarded as her own. She promoted fresh expeditions, and her barks no longer touched the coasts of Iceland and Greenland, without endeavouring to reach the legendary land in which the vine flourished. Some of those expeditions, the majority of them, indeed, were lost in the mists of the ocean. Others, like Thorstein's, mistook their course, and were cast on barren shores; but a few, having better luck, reached the continent beyond the sea, explored the unknown creeks, and, finally, found the

mouth of the fair river on whose bank Leifs-Budir rose.

Two Norwegian brothers, Helge and Finn, were of this fortunate number. They had come to Iceland for trade, and Leif Erikson had induced them to proceed to Vinland by the tales he told them of that highly favoured land.

"Go, set sail thitherward, ye young men," said Bjorn's old comrade. "There is the happy land where the vine and the laurel grow together. There you will become rich, as I did, and your old age will be passed, as I pass mine in my palace, in feasting and pleasure. My good wishes and my hospitality will go with you, for I place my Leifs-Budir houses at your disposal. They are not so good as my Brattehilde residence, but they will afford you and yours fair shelter."

The two brothers thanked Leif Erikson heartily, and, the season being propitious, they hastened, on the assurance of their host, to set sail and seek the wide ocean under the guidance of a pilot who was no other than Haki, the former companion of Bjorn Herwolfson.

Leif-the-Lucky had made a request of them at parting:

"When you reach the Stranm-Fjord," he said, "salute, on my behalf, my sister Freydize, whom I regard as the Queen of Vinland. She is rather rough

and whimsical in her ways, but the blood of Erik is in her veins. She is as brave as one of the Virgins of the Shields, and her heart is full of noble feelings. I am sure she will give you a great welcome."

The first landing-place of Helge and Finn, after the customary pauses at Helluland and Markland (Newfoundland and Acadia), was the Stranm-Fjord, or Buzzard's Bay. They did not meet Freydize there; she was passing the egg season at Bird Island. The brothers were distressed by this mischance which prevented them from fulfilling the behest of their generous host at Brattehilde, for they could not make any delay on their voyage, if they were to return to their home before winter. Therefore, they transmitted her brother's greeting to Freydize by proxy, and informed her of their intention to proceed directly to Vinland.

This news aroused all the evil instincts that had of late lain dormant in the soul of Erik's daughter. The departure of Thorfinn and Gudrid, far from securing the object of her ambition to her, had lessened her power. They had taken away with them the "cream" of the colony, and those who remained, at the Stranm-Fjord as well as in Vinland, lived in a quarrelsome independence, refusing to tolerate any restraint, or to recognize any authority. Nevertheless, Freydize still indulged in the baseless dream of reigning over Vinland, and imposing her

laws, her power, and her whims upon the people. To attain this end she needed the prestige of wealth, and, in her helplessness, she made her lamentation, blaming fate for her isolation and craving for some "providence" to enable her to emerge from obscurity and inaction.

And now, this "providence" revealed itself to her eyes in the bodily forms of two Norwegian brothers, whose ship, she had been told, was richly fitted up with precious ornaments, with much gold on the poop, with sparkling masts, and sails of many-coloured stuffs, bespeaking pirates of quality. Freydize formed her plan of campaign with great celerity. She left Bird Island at once, returned to the mainland, and, having called an assembly of the colonists, she addressed them in terms well calculated to stimulate their cupidity. She had no great trouble in winning them to her cause. All these men were freebooters, and, having a profitable enterprise proposed to them, did not make inquiry into her projects or the aim of her action. They had seen what she could do in the time of the Skrellings, and, without further parley, they took the oath of blind obedience to her on all occasions, before the ancient gods, whom alone they recognized.

Thorvar's boat, built in the Vinland shipyard, could not make a fine figure by the side of the splendid *drakar* of the Norwegian brothers; but

Freydize reckoned precisely on that very fact to help her to play her game with them.

She was mistaken upon this point; to her great astonishment, she had not to appeal to their pity. Helge and Finn, like gallant knights, saluted the daughter of Erik the Red as the undisputed Queen of Vinland, in the presence of their crews and the assembled colonists. And more still, they attributed that sovereign quality to her on behalf of Leif the Lucky.

At these words, Freydize was filled with joy. Her dream was turning to a reality more fair, more glorious, than she had dared to admit to her ambitious fancy. But this strange woman, who was incapable of lofty sentiments, resembled no other woman in her mode of expressing satisfaction. Emboldened by the bearing of the two strangers, she changed her plan, and, turning towards the Vinland colonists, she addressed them thus:

"You hear! I am your Queen, and you owe me full and entire submission. Whatever my orders, you will obey them on the instant. My brother, to whom this land belongs, has given it to me, and I shall know how to maintain my rights."

Then she addressed the two brothers: "Sirs, I am happy that you have come, and I thank you for your courtesy. My country is rich, you will make good prizes there, and we will share with you."

The Norwegians, rather taken aback, merely bowed.

"Moreover, these houses, stores, and barns are mine," resumed Freydize. "I shall, therefore, request you to remove your goods and your merchandise, so that I may occupy them and store in them my share of wine, timbers, and furs."

Helge and Finn considered that their hostess was making an exorbitant demand, Leif Erikson having clearly intimated that his houses in Leifs-Budir were to be at their disposal. However, to avoid quarrel, and as, after all, they were in the house of the Queen of Vinland, they acquiesced, vacated the place, and went off to find a dwelling in the neighbourhood of the sea. Nevertheless, the elder brother, Helge, could not refrain from saying to Freydize, when taking leave of her:

"We are not of the same nature; you will always get the better of us easily by your cunning."

Leif's sister kept these words, which she regarded as an augury, in her mind, and, being thenceforward certain of success, she turned her attention at once to the organization of her kingdom.

She began by exacting a tithe from all the colonists; this went to swell her share. Then prosperity, even prodigality, shortly began to reign at Leifs-Budir. The stores and warehouses were filled with products of all sorts. This was also the case at the

house which the two brothers had built on the sea-coast, and where, according to the chronicle, they lived "properly," meaning merrily.

There, each day brought some new pleasure, and life was a perpetual revel. Weeks succeeded weeks, and, like their forerunners of the already distant time of Leif, and those later days of Thorwald and Thorfinn, the Norsemen of Helge and Finn became immersed in the delights of Vinland, and were indifferent to every other consideration. But their chiefs, wiser than they, and not caring to live in onerous subjection to their suzerain lady, resolved to depart before the ice-floes from the North should have barred their way home. They gave Freydize formal notice of their intention, and she perceived that the time for action was come.

The Queen took advantage of a farewell revel which had kept the strangers all night under the captivating spell of drunkenness, to make a visit in the early morning to the dwelling of the two brothers. She was wrapped in her husband's pallium and her feet were bare. The sentinel, charged with the safety of Helge and Finn, like all the others, was sleeping off the effects of wine, and had not even taken the trouble to close their door, so that Freydize had only to push it, and find herself in the presence of Finn, who occupied the first room.

The young pirate, fully dressed, lay upon the bed

of leaves; his head was still girt with the festive chaplet of flowers. His chest was heavily oppressed; it rose and fell with difficulty; he seemed to be under the influence of a terrible dream, and instead of dispelling this the presence of the Queen rendered it more painful. It was, indeed, a nightmare, and he could not shake it off. Freydize stood at the threshold with folded arms, contemplating him with an implacable gaze. Under the spell of her fixed look, Finn moved on his couch, raised himself up with an effort, but only to sink down again helplessly, his head falling back. At length, after a struggle, he succeeded in sitting up, and when, having partially shaken off his drunkenness, he perceived the daughter of Erik, standing still as a statue, and bathed in the pale light of dawn, he was on the point of crying out. But Freydize put a finger on her lips, and, without a word, signed to Finn to follow her to the space outside the house, where she seated herself on a tree-trunk.

The Norwegian came out and placed himself by her side.

"What do you want of me, Freydize? What has brought you here at such an hour?"

Leif's sister did not answer immediately. But, finding that Finn was falling asleep again, she said, slowly:

"You like this country?"

"FREYDIZE PUT A FINGER ON HER LIPS."

"Certainly, I do. The climate is mild, and its products surpass all that can be desired; but your conduct towards us makes me less appreciative of its merits, for I think it unjust, and it seems to me like a quarrel without a motive."

"What you say is true. At least, that is my feeling, and I came to put a stop to this state of things."

"In that case, blessings on you! I subscribe beforehand to all your conditions, for the sake of living in peace with you; for you cannot make harder terms than you have laid on us already."

"Well, then, listen to me! Your warehouses are crammed with merchandise, and you intend to go away."

"That is the fact."

"I, too, wish to go away, to see my brother again, and, like him, to live on my wealth."

"You are right, and if it please you, we will set sail together."

"I agree to that, but your proposal cannot be carried out unless you and your brother lend your aid to it. I have, thanks to your contribution, and my own resources, accumulated a greater amount of merchandise than you, and my ship is smaller than yours. If I am to get away, you must change ships with me. You have great influence over your brother; plead my cause, obtain from him what I ask, and henceforth we shall live in peace."

Freydize expected a refusal, or at least some reservation, so that she was surprised when Finn said, simply:

"What you wish can be done, and, if my brother does not object, — I think I may assure you that he will not, — we will let you have our *drakar*, since we can thus do you a service."

This response to her request did not fit in with the plan that Freydize had arranged. She was disconcerted by the too great liberality of Finn. He was playing her game for her; leaving her no pretext for carrying out her idea.

This consideration, however, was not likely to arrest the wicked vixen for long, and, even before she left Finn, who returned to his house to resume his interrupted sleep, while she went back to her own dwelling, she had come to an irrevocable decision. The Norwegians did not wish for war; all right! but they should have it, nevertheless, and at once! Passing their encampment in the early morning, she saw the men lying about, heavily intoxicated, and shook several of them; but they merely grunted without waking. The opportunity was favourable; she would turn it to instant advantage. Then Freydize ran swiftly through the woods to Leifs-Budir.

She arrived before the camp was on foot. The revel of the previous night had also been long and deep there, and Thorvar was even more drunk than

the others. The shrill cries of his wife failed for some time to arouse him from his heavy slumber. When, at length, he opened his eyes, it was to behold Freydize, making frantic gestures, rolling herself about on the floor, and tearing her hair.

"What is the matter?" asked Thorvar, in great alarm.

"The matter," answered his wife, with sobs and gurglings in her throat, interrupting her words, "is, that I have just been insulted — derided — beaten — "

"What do you mean? Who has insulted you? Who has beaten you?"

"I went this morning to the Norwegians' house — I wanted to buy their ship from them — but, instead of giving me an answer — they — they struck me, — yes — me — their Queen. They beat me with rods — "

Thorvar, who foresaw a terrible "scene," at first endeavoured to quiet his wife. He advanced the cogent argument of their own interests.

"We shall see," he said, "how to bring these Norwegians to reason. They will sell us their ship, you may be sure."

And then he turned to the wall and was dropping off to sleep again. But this free and easy way of taking her injuries did not suit Freydize. She sprang up like a fury, and shrieked :

"Ah! If Leif were but here, or Thorhall — the Hunter — I should be avenged already! At this moment they would be rushing on the camp of the Norwegians at the head of my people in arms! But you, poor creature, your arm is too weak and your heart is too cowardly to avenge an insult to me which stains you also. Well then, hearken to me, Thorvar, if you do not chastise these vile strangers who have humbled my soul and hurt my body, I swear by the names of Thorwald and Thorstein that when I get back to Greenland I will demand divorce."

This was the most flagrant insult, according to the social notions of Scandinavia, that a woman could put upon her husband. Thorvar, smarting under the sting of his wife's threat, as though an arrow or a spear had pierced his flesh, sprang from his couch. Without a word, he snatched his sword and helmet from the wall, took his buckler on his arm, and, rushing into the cantonment, where his men were yawning and stretching themselves in only half-sobered laziness, he raised the war-cry. They all heard it, and the whole band was speedily in arms and ready to march.

Freydize then appeared to them, and her flashing eyes and trembling lips appealed to the men's hearts irresistibly. She was beautiful thus, with a murderous beauty, her hair was loosened in the wind, a corslet of steel and a dark blue chlamys clasped upon

the shoulder set off the figure of the fierce Amazon. In one hand she carried an axe, and her sword-hilt glittered at her side.

They were all subjugated by this woman, the lads of the Stranm-Fjord and the colonists of Vinland. At the tale told by their Queen, they raised a cry as though from one man, and, in a body, rushed down upon the strangers' camp. Therein, the god of drunkenness was still strewing the poppies of slumber, and before they had time to perceive what was happening, the Norwegian guards and sailors were slaughtered or nailed to the earth by lance thrusts. Thorvar presided at this massacre, which was within the compass of his valour, while Freydize, reserving the warrior's share to herself, hurried with her axe uplifted to the house whence she had come, alone and in safety, so recently.

This time, Finn was laid under no charm, no magnetic spell ; he passed, without transition, from a terrestrial dream to the eternal rest.

The dull, heavy sound of the axe as it crashed into his brother's skull made Helge spring from his bed, and rush into the outer room, but he could not believe the whole truth of the spectacle before him. Wild with grief, he flung himself upon Finn, raised him up, and strove to stanch the blood that was streaming from his ghastly wound. He called to him, he kissed him, he entreated him to live.

For this moment, Freydize had waited. She darted out of the corner in which she had hidden herself, and struck Helge a terrible blow at the back of the neck, which all but severed the head from the body.

Then, with eyes that "saw red," and a bestial grin upon her face, the Queen contemplated her handiwork. She was proud of it; she would have had her whole people come to applaud her valour, but other duties called her away. The Norwegian chiefs were dead; it behoved her now to see that none of their companions survived them.

At the first glance, it seemed as though the business had been as thoroughly done on the part of her people as on her own, and she was about to compliment the former, when her eyes fell on five women whom they had spared. At sight of these poor wretches, her wrath flamed up, and, flinging a torrent of abuse at her warriors, she sprang upon the women who were rooted to the ground by terror, whirled her axe, which seemed to revolve in a mist of blood, round her head, and soon hacked the group into a heap of mashed flesh, at which the long-haired dogs, scenting strange game, sniffed inquisitively.

Thorvar's band beheld this spectacle in speechless consternation. These men, ready for any deed, stained with much murder, had found their master. Freydize appeared to them like the goddess of

crime, and for the first time in their life, perhaps, conscience awoke vague feelings of mercy and compassion in them. Freydize, full of the exultation of her exploit, did not at first perceive this change; only when she observed the dark, sullen, moody mien of these professional pirates, did she recognize the danger that threatened her; then she advanced towards the armed force, and said, with an air of defiance:

"If Fortune grants that we return to Greenland, I will cut off from the midst of you the man who shall relate these things. We will say that *they* have remained here."

And this was the story they told when, in the spring of 1013, Thorvar and Freydize, on board the Norwegian's *drakar*, returned to Greenland, and reëntered the palace of Brattehilde.

Notwithstanding these precautions, Leif had his suspicions. He questioned his sister, who answered boldly that the Norwegians had remained in Vinland, and, having decided on settling there, had sold their ship to her in order to facilitate the transport of her goods, her own vessel being too small for that purpose. The crew were questioned in their turn, but as they were still under the influence of the terror inspired by Freydize, they confirmed her words. Thorvar, only, hesitated and was confused. Then Leif ceased to doubt; he had some of the

crew put to the torture, and, when the truth had been wrung from them, he said, sadly:

"I cannot punish my sister, for her blood is mine; but time will take charge of her chastisement. Let none listen to her voice, meet her eyes, or obey any gesture of hers. Let her live a stranger among us, without aid, and without pity. Let our houses, let our churches be shut against her. Living, let her wander like a shade among the rude rocks and the eternal snows."

Vainly did Freydize rebel against this anathema. Leif was inexorable. She fell at her brother's feet, imploring him to let her return to Vinland. For his sole answer, he showed her the flaming *drakar* of the two Norwegian brothers set on fire at his command. She begged him to give her a remnant of the immense wealth that she had brought back with her; he refused, telling her that the riches so ill-gotten should serve to endow the churches, convents, and monasteries, that were now rising on all sides. She implored him, at least, to allow her to end her days in one of those quiet retreats, but he refused her anew.

Then, utterly beaten and miserable, spurned by all, and pointed at as noisome beasts, the former sovereign of Vinland and her craven husband betook them to the solitudes, where they ended their desolate days amid the rocks and the eternal snows.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN EXPEDITION TO THE SOUTH OF VINLAND.

A Savage Chief — Valthiof and Vimar — The Expedition of Hervador, a Colonist of Vinland in 1051 — A Devastated Country — Human Sacrifice — The White Men — Their King, of Scandinavian Origin — He Presses the Norsemen to Go Away.

At the time when Thorwald's companions had directed their courses, as we know, to the south of Vinland, some of them, leaving it to the majority of the expedition to explore Long Island in detail, held on their way, and finally came in sight of a coast more fertile than any which they had hitherto seen.

They had disembarked, and were making ready to explore the interior of this land of promise, when a host of natives, who seemed to be dyed red, came rushing down to the beach. These people had light blue eyes, which gave their faces a strange expression. They wore feathers in their hair, necklaces of shells, and on their arms and legs shell bracelets and anklets. On their shiny skins were painted flowers, birds, and ornaments of various sorts and

colours. The person who appeared to be their chief approached the Norsemen, and examined their coats of mail, their shields, and their helmets, with lively curiosity, accompanying the inspection of each article by a burst of laughter, which must have puzzled the strangers, and was immediately echoed by his followers.

The natives continued to arrive from everywhere, until the beach was crowded with them. And they all laughed, and indulged in pantomime of the most animated and diverting description. Presently, the chief turned his attention to the arms, which were new to him, like the rest. He had the use of the sword explained to him by pantomime, but the handling of the axe impressed him more deeply. While a sailor was showing him how useful a weapon it might be, he snatched the axe from the man's hands, and brought it down on a tree, in which it stuck fast. General hilarity greeted this exploit. Then he approached a piece of rock and struck a splinter from it by a well-aimed blow. This time the laugh was uproarious. Anon, he fell to a close examination of the weapon capable of producing such effects, and, suddenly yielding to an impulse of unwholesome curiosity, he raised the axe high in the air, and brought it down with all his strength on the head of one of his subjects.

At the sight of the man lying prone on the

ground, bathed in his blood, with widely staring eyes, the murderer stood stupefied; then a convulsive laugh shook him like an aspen; but, awaking suddenly to the reality, he was stricken with fear, and fled, followed by the rest of the natives.

The Norsemen instinctively pursued these hilarious people, but failed to come up with them, and two children only fell into their hands. These were taken to the beach, notwithstanding their shrieks of terror, and carried on board the ship. The Norsemen then sailed away, with the full intention of returning, but in force, next time; they judged correctly that there was everything to fear from a people so careless of human life.

The following year Thorwald set out upon the expedition from which he was not to return; and there was no further question of the country of the red men. The two little savages, who had been taught the Scandinavian language, and spoke it fluently, had, however, excited the curiosity of the inhabitants of Vinland to the highest pitch, by stating that, in a territory beyond theirs, a people existed who were ruled by a white man with fair hair, and that he had come from the North. This legend was well known among them, and their tribe had frequent quarrels with the other. They even knew that the people of that country painted their bodies white, on great occasions, to render

homage to the white garments of their warrior-chief. This country was called *The Land of the White Men.*

Thorfinn and Gudrid, being much interested in this strange revelation, thought of visiting those distant coasts; as, however, their destiny had led them to a place of repose and retirement, they did not carry the project into execution, but left it to others, to pursue discovery in that direction. Helge and Finn had also intended to explore towards the south, but their tragic fate interfered, in its turn, and, as we know, Freydize, their murderess, had a mind for adventures of another kind. Moreover, Vinland had entered upon an era of peaceful colonisation and regular traffic with Greenland and Iceland, which had put aside the idea of extension, and, still more completely, all desire for fresh expeditions.

Nevertheless, the vision of *The Land of the White Men* haunted the fancy of some among the Vinlanders. The old seamen, especially, dreamed of those far-off shores with its wonders, so constantly vaunted by the two natives, who had been baptised by the names of Valthiof and Vimar. What was Vinland in comparison with their country, where the sun was always shining, where the tall and plenteous herbage grew higher than the stature of men, and the fruits of the soil interwove their stems far above the wayfarers, where birds and fishes let

themselves be caught in the hand? Farther down, the vision was still more attractive, for there, it was said, in *The Land of the White Men*, gold was found in abundance. Moreover, the White Men had charge of a miraculous fountain, that restored health and youth to all who drank of its waters.

For such an enterprise as the invasion of such a country, a new chief was required; one to be trusted, respected, obeyed — like Leif, like Thorwald, like Thorfinn and Gudrid. Now it happened that the two latter, emblems of the practical and fruitful colonisation of the transatlantic countries, had their fellow in a rich colonist of Leifs-Budir, of the name of Hervador, who undertook the adventure, bravely seconded by his wife, Syasi — the Fair.

They set sail in the spring of the year 1051, and landed first in the country of Valthiof and Vimar. The latter rejoiced in the thought of once more seeing men of their own race, their parents, their friends, and the companions of their childhood, and making them all friendly to the Norsemen, their compatriots by adoption. Above all, they were impatient to examine the land of their birth, to sound its depths and utilise its wealth. What, then, was their surprise and disappointment to find no inhabitants on the coast! The very earth itself seemed to have been ravaged by a scourge of some kind, wielded by the implacable hand of man, such as

war, or invasion, making all things around desolate and void.

They went on farther, to find the same solitude, the same devastation! At length, on a beach, at the back of a bay, they beheld a few natives, whose bodies were smeared with a kind of white pigment. Valthiof went ashore with some sailors, and advanced towards the natives, who evinced neither fear nor surprise at their approach. They were equally unmoved by the spectacle of the ship, with its tackle and its sails displayed. Thence it was concluded that these natives had previously seen sailors and a ship. Valthiof spoke to them and they understood his meaning; he also understood theirs. Hervador learned by this means that the country was governed by an old man of a foreign race. In order to meet with him, the commander would have to ascend a river whose mouth was at some distance. On hearing the sound of a waterfall he was to stop; it would be there.

Hervador followed these instructions. The river was wide and deep; its banks were bordered by fine trees. The Norsemen entered it with delight; they were enchanted with what they saw, and impatient to go ashore, but to this their chief was opposed. He was desirous, above all, to know the white man who had, so the natives said, a long, white beard. However, trees succeeded to trees,

green spaces to green spaces, hills to hills, and still the place that had been described was not reached. At length, after several hours' navigation, the sound of a distant cataract was borne to the impatient voyagers, at first vaguely, then with greater distinctness. They were approaching the goal; and, in fact, the presence of man was traceable in a thousand ways, on both banks, although no human being was visible.

A distinct sequence of sound was mingled with the tumbling of the cascade. The air vibrated with a metallic clashing, and strokes on gongs, accompanied by slow chanting, repeated in chorus by an evidently numerous crowd.

Then Hervador and his companions went ashore, leaving Syasi and her women in the charge of a few sailors. They struck into the woods, and before long reached the edge of a vast clearing. They did not emerge into the glade, for a great crowd of people occupied the space. These people were engaged in celebrating a festival, no doubt religious; and the unseen spectators rightly concluded that strangers would not be admitted to ceremonies of such a kind. They concealed themselves in a thicket, and looked on with great curiosity and interest.

In front of them stood twenty lads, from twelve to fifteen years old, painted white from head to

foot. The people surrounded these boys, dancing and singing to the sound of strange instruments and primitive castanets. The noise, which was already deafening, increased every moment, and with it the excitement and the contortions of the people. The dancers, who had commenced with a measured and formal sort of pantomime, had arrived progressively at a witch's sabbath, and this bade fair to degenerate into one of those devil-dances which have the wild mountain peaks for a ballroom.

On a sudden, although the strangers had not perceived that any sign was made, or heard any order given, the whole performance was checked, — dance, songs, and gongs. Pushing aside the branches which concealed them from the crowd, the Norsemen perceived that an orderly body of men was advancing towards them, headed by an old man on horseback. A white standard was displayed above his head, and he was unmistakably of Scandinavian race.

At this point we ask leave to introduce a parenthesis.

The presence of a horse on the new continent may seem surprising, for the Spaniards and the Portuguese have emphatically stated that they saw no horses anywhere on American territory.

It may be, indeed, that the Icelandic chronicler, being accustomed to live among horses, included them in his narrative as a matter of course. But,

on the other hand, we know that the Norsemen took horses with them almost always. Whole squadrons were landed from their ships. And we have seen that Erik the Red rode down to the shore upon his war-horse.

Hence, it is likely that "The White Man" had brought a horse into the country in which Hervador's adventure took place. That country, according to all the probabilities, and to the descriptions of the *Saga*, is none other than the territory about the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

The situation of the falls indicates that the scene of the meeting of the two chiefs was about fifteen miles from Washington.

At the approach of the white man, the ceremony assumed a more distinct form. The victims, for it was evident that a human sacrifice was about to be perpetrated, were placed under a tree, between a double line of lads of their own age, provided with sticks, who dealt them heavy blows. Their backs and arms were speedily striped with cruel wales, and bleeding, but not a cry, not a plaint arose from the group of sufferers.

Under the spreading branches of the tree the dancing and singing began again, but this time both were more solemn, and close by, women, doubtless the mothers of the victims, weeping and uttering shrieks of woe, made ready mats composed

of skins, moss, and grasses, for the burial of their sons. The hidden witnesses could not mistake the women's purpose.

Now the time had come for the sacrifice. Five aged men, priests, fetish-makers or diviners, drew near, and, gathering up the boughs and clusters of leaves which certain youths who had climbed into the tree, flung down, twisted and wove them into wreaths, which they placed on the heads of the victims. Then the mothers, in a last embrace, wrapped the mats they had prepared around their children.

Beholding these arrangements, the Norsemen shuddered with horror, for it was plain that the wretched youths were to be burned alive. Instinctively they grasped their sword hilts and were about to rush to the rescue; but Valthiof and Vimar restrained them. This ceremony recalled a similar custom of their own childhood to their remembrance. They knew the fate that awaited the youths, and their own origin might have been traced in their tone, when they said simultaneously, looking at each other:

"They are not all to die."

Hervador and his companions were astonished by this assurance, and Valthiof, under the inspiration of a distant recollection, added:

"No, they are not all to die. Oki, the spirit of evil, will suck the blood of those who fall to his share; the others will be led into the depth of the

woods by the mild eyed Hennis, and, afterwards, they will return to their homes and relate what they shall have seen in the regions of happiness."

At that moment, amid solemn silence, the five sacrificers dragged the youths towards the ravine and flung them into it, one after the other.

Then did Hervador understand Valthiof's apologue. Those among the boys who were killed in their fall became the prey of wild beasts, and those whom death had spared were taken to their hidden dwellings by the priests and diviners, who would instruct them in their faith and its rites, in order to restore them afterwards to society as catechists.

It was to soften their fall and thus to aid them to achieve this brilliant destiny, that their mothers had wrapped them up so snugly in skins, mosses, and dried grass.

On the completion of the ceremony, the Norsemen turned their attention to the man of their own race. His regular features bore no resemblance to those of the people around him. A snow-white beard was spread out upon his broad breast; on his head was a crown set with precious stones, and the upper part of his figure was half hidden by the folds of a chlamys of cloth of gold, fastened on the shoulder. The priests and the crowd prostrated themselves before him several times, and then formed themselves into processional order to escort him.

The procession made the round of the glade, which resembled a circus cut out of the forest. At the back, and like a scene in a theatre, rose the rocky and jagged edge of the precipice, and beyond stretched a wonderful range of blue hills, tossed up, as it were, like foaming waves. The musicians headed the procession ; then came the priests.

At the approach of the Chief, the Norsemen came out of their hiding-place, to join his subjects in doing homage to him. They walked helmeted, hand proudly set on hip, and sword lowered in token of respect ; but their appearance produced anything but the effect they anticipated. The crowd was enraged by the sight of them, and they were instantly surrounded by a number of men who seized upon them, evidently with the worst intentions.

Fortunately, the white man interfered. In the tumult he could not make out from a distance exactly what was happening ; but he blew a loud blast from a horn which hung by a gold chain at his neck. At this signal, hands were loosened, weapons were lowered, and the strangers, released and unmolested, advanced in good order, Hervador at their head, with all the pride of a pirate of the olden time.

The two chiefs are face to face. The old man contemplates these war-like seamen who bring back to him the days when he was young as they are now, and like them a daring adventurer, with emotion

THE NORSEMEN MEETING THE WHITE CHIEF.

which he vainly endeavours to disguise. For he really is of the same race as these explorers. He, too, has worn helmet and borne shield, and his moustache was golden-hued before the goddess of snow-storms sprinkled it with the rime of the years. He beckoned the newcomers to him and inquired of them in the Norse tongue what was the name of their country.

"I was born in Vinland," replied Hervador, "but I am of Icelandic origin."

"Then we are fellow-countrymen," exclaimed the old man, "for I am from Kamb, the Thing district."

"That was my father's country."

"Ah! my son, why can I not press you to my heart, embracing in your person all those who were dear to me? Inexorable fate has made me the chief, and, alas! also the prisoner and liegeman of this people. Why is it that, instead of blessing the gods for your coming, my soul is full of trouble? It is because your life is in danger."

"For what reason, my father? Are you not the king? You have already shown us your power by taking us out of the hands of some madmen among your people. We do not come as enemies; we want to live in peace with your subjects."

The old man reflected for a moment, then he replied:

"It is impossible. Listen to my story, and you shall judge for yourself. I was banished, voluntarily,

from Iceland, in consequence of an imprudent vow, and thrown upon this coast whither a mysterious current, a submarine river, draws ships which come from the high seas. On seeing me, the natives were seized with a sudden frenzy, cast themselves down on the ground and worshipped me as a god. Then they led me into the interior of the country, where the capital is, set me on a platform, and made me understand that they had chosen me for their chief. But, I say again, I was also their prisoner. At a later period, when I had learned their language, this mystery was explained to me. I was told that a white man named Ary Marson — one of us, no doubt — had come to these shores, and, being chosen by the people, had reigned here. When? Who knows? Centuries ago, it may be. But the tradition of him has been preserved pure and intact, with the firm persuasion also that this chief, this god, was not dead, and that he would come back. My arrival among this good and simple race — for such these people are, in spite of appearances — has verified the legend. In their eyes, I am Ary Marson, and therefore you can understand how carefully I am guarded lest I escape them a second time."

"That is all well," said Hervador, interrupting the old man; "but it seems to me your high position ought precisely to enable you to protect and welcome us."

"Wait, my son, I have not yet said all. My first care, on assuming the crown, was for my companions, and I made anxious inquiry respecting them; but I was answered only by signs which I did not understand. Afterwards, I learned that they had been massacred on the spot. These men, to whom white is a sacred symbol, will admit one white man only, their chief, their white god, and would not endure the presence of any besides myself. If I am a beneficent spirit, you are, in their eyes, demons sent by the spirits of evil to do me harm. Stay; you hear the noise they are making even now; no doubt they think our interview is lasting too long, and are afraid that I shall be carried away from you to the ethereal regions of heaven."

The crowd had, in fact, again collected about the strangers, and was forming around the chief. The attitude of the people was full of menace. The old White King rode forward towards the principal men of the tribe, who formed a separate group, and seemed to direct the others. He held a short parley with them, and at its close, returning to his fellow countrymen, he said:

"I have consulted the head men of this country. They have left it to me to decide upon your fate. I therefore give you permission to go away, and I advise you, to my great regret, to profit by it without delay, for I must tell you that my people have not

assigned this trust to me with full and free good-will. They already accuse me of violating the law of the kingdom; but that they believe me to be immortal, I might have to pay for my temerity with my life."

Hervador communicated this ultimatum to his companions. They resolved to depart immediately, and took leave of the old king. "If destiny should one day lead us back to our mother country, how are we to name our liberator?" asked the Norse chief.

"That I will not tell you," replied the White Man, "because I would not have my kinsmen and my brothers-in-arms make the voyage and risk the fate which would have befallen you, but for my protection. Moreover, I am bending beneath the weight of years, and have but a little while to live. There are several powerful and highly esteemed men in this country — absent for the moment — who would not be willing to tolerate foreigners."

"I understand your scruples, and I do not urge you to disclose your name; but, tell me, have you no desire to make known to those whom you have loved that you still live, and have not forgotten them?"

The king reflected for a brief space; it was plain that a struggle was going on within his breast. Of a sudden, he formed a resolution, and, drawing his sword, he said:

"If fortune permits you to return to Iceland, deliver this blade to Kjartan, a colonist of Froda —"

Again he hesitated:

"And this ring to Thuride, his mother."

"It shall be done, my lord, I promise you. I will seek Kjartan and Thuride; but from whom shall I tell them these rich gifts come?"

"From one who was more friendly to the lady of Froda than to her brother, the *Gode* of Helgafell."

"And this will be all?"

"Yes, all."

Hervador bowed and turned away, to retrace his steps to the river bank with his companions. The king called him back.

"One other precaution I recommend you to observe," he said. "This country is of great extent, and has but few ports; foreigners are threatened with death by the inhabitants of every part of it. Return direct to your home, without stopping anywhere on the way."

Having thus spoken, the "White Man" made a sign, and two attendants took his horse by the bridle. He rode away from the forest glade as he had come, canopied by the folds of his white standard, with the nobles of his kingdom for his escort, while the multitude accompanied the Norsemen to their ship, in order to make sure of their departure.

CHAPTER XV.

SYASI-THE-FAIR.

Feminine Curiosity — Syasis-Budir — A Flourishing Colony — The Skrellings again — A Fierce Fight — The Death of Syasi.

Curiosity, we are told, is a feminine failing. Syasi and her companions shared that weakness with the rest of their sex. Their imagination was excited by the narratives of their husbands; they ardently desired to live among these "white men," whom their chief declared to be good by nature, and to undertake their education. Although the capital of these white men's country was closed to them, the coast was free to all comers, and the adventure might at least be attempted.

At first Hervador was against the enterprise, but his opinion was disregarded. The women argued that, as the risk was foreknown, they were forearmed, and might incur it with confidence. And so, after one day's interval, the pilot set his helm once more to the west, and as a gulf of considerable extent was visible in the distance, steered the ship's course for its coast. There were men on the shore, but they were not dressed in white. They spoke loudly, and

waved long staves in token of pacific intentions, according to the custom of primitive tribes.

Valthiof and Vimar were sent on as spokesmen. The natives being questioned, showed a ready disposition to enter into relations with them. Their country was rich, adapted for commerce, and its inhabitants asked no better than to enable the new arrivals to profit by its advantages, provided that they themselves were promised good treatment in return.

The emissaries of the Norsemen having pledged them to these terms, the natives approached the ship, and expressed great admiration of its size, its elegant form, and its rigging. They saluted Hervador as "the king of this floating palace,"—so they called him in their pictorial language,—they welcomed his crew who came to meet them ; but when they caught sight of Syasi-the-Fair, their astonishment gave place to the purest devotion. Never had they imagined that a human creature could be so perfect ; the wife of Hervador appeared to them a goddess incarnate, the fairest of all, and instinctively they fell at her feet to worship her.

Syasi was triumphant. The King of the White Men had his fellow in her, though of very different fame ; and, to go farther back into history, her reign promised to be more durable, and above all more enviable than that of Freydize, whose feats and crimes had been familiar to her in her childhood. She stepped

ashore like a queen, draped in her mantle, which showed off the sunny curls of her fair hair. Her majestic brow, too, was shaded by the bright, fair locks that formed a halo around her erect, queenly head. Her eyes were of the purest azure, and her sensitive lips, formed for command, quivered with the least breath.

The ship's company, with the exception of the watch, disembarked, and immediately set about seeking a suitable place to settle in. Such a spot readily was found, within easy distance from the sea and sheltered from the north winds by a wooded height. The Norsemen, who were skilled carpenters, quickly covered the selected space with dwellings on the same pattern as those of Leifs-Budir, which were exact copies of the Scandinavian habitations. So great was the admiration of the natives for this picturesque and commodious architecture, that they renounced their nomad life to dwell with their brethren of the North, in houses of their own, artistically decorated with the heads of animals and grinning grotesque designs in every colour. Very soon Syasis-Budir was an accurate reproduction of a Norwegian town.

With his planter's experience, acquired in his childhood in Vinland, Hervador, leaving sovereign rule to his wife, speedily transformed the country into a magnificent colony. The earth, which contained no gold, yielded instead abundant harvests

SYASI – THE – FAIR.

two and even three times a year. Hunting and fishing furnished ample supplies to the fastidious appetites of the colonists. The miraculous fountain of which Valthiof and Vimar had told such great things was not, indeed, revealed to the settlers, but it seemed as though it had mingled its waters with the streams of Syasis-Budir, for never had its inhabitants been in such good health elsewhere or their wives in such good looks.

If he had desired to do so, Hervador might have freighted his ship every season with skins, precious woods, and essences, and thus created a considerable trade, for in those happy days one ship's cargo had often made the fortune of its owner; but Syasi's husband had no ambition of that kind. His dream found its realization in his colony; he was more wealthy than a king, more free than the bird in the air, and, being content with his fate, he just let himself live.

Everything was going well in this little corner of the earth, where happiness, opulence, and unity reigned, when all of a sudden a swarm of natives belonging to neighbouring tribes came into the town in a state of distracted terror, flying, as they alleged, before a horde of demons who were advancing, like an army of ants, laying waste everything on its way.

The Norsemen immediately recognized their enemies, the Skrellings, in this devouring horde as

described by the fugitives. The accursed beings persisted in their invasion. They came down, they still came down, passing along the coast and destroying all before them. They had already depopulated the regions that had been visited by the Norsemen, Newfoundland, Markland, the Marvellous Coasts. They were afraid of Vinland, having been frequently defeated there, and kept clear of it, but were now attacking the rich countries known to us as Virginia and Florida.

Hervador, who was well acquainted with their habits, and knew by tradition that there was no means of parleying with this dwarfish people, who were more brutish than the wild beasts of the untrodden forests, gave the alarm and called the whole of his colony together. The hour was come for them to defend their highly prized possessions, to dispute them with the stupid greed of evil and irrational beings.

Never had Syasis-Budir worn a brighter, a more sunny aspect. The gardens were rich in flowers and fruit, the birds on the leaf-laden branches sang the hymn of the earth's renewal; in the distance, meadows, fields, and nursery grounds were covered with young grass, yellowing wheat, and precious shrubs. The whole scene denoted quietude, prosperity, abundance; there was nothing to foretell that the cruel irony of war was, within the briefest space, to transform the

laughing face of the fair earth into a dreary wilderness, those smiling abodes of content into smoking ruins, and the peaceful settlers into disfigured corpses lying prone in the desert that had so recently been a scene of content and cheerfulness.

There was not a moment to be lost. While Hervador was collecting his people and rallying their courage, Syasi, recalling the deeds of Freydize before Thorfinn's-Budir, placed her helmet on her head, her buckler on her arm, and took her axe in her hand. When she appeared thus arrayed before her liegemen and her assembled people, she was greeted by a shout of enthusiasm and admiration.

The good Queen, who had presided over this happy scene of peaceful industry, was suddenly transformed into a goddess of war. Her eyes flashed, and her hand closed fiercely upon the weapon which she longed to redden in the blood of the detested race. Some of the sailors, who had already had to do with the Skrellings, disposed the forces of the colony with a view to defeating their tactics, which consisted of a formation in mass before attacking. The Norsemen, to prevent this concentration, beat the woods in several directions, assisted by little groups of natives, and very shortly the fighting began simultaneously at many respectively distant points, but all connected by a cordon of tried warriors. Hervador commanded this first line. Syasi remained in the

rear with a troop of picked men, ready to advance at the first signal to support the attack or cover the retreat of her husband. Victory speedily declared itself on the side of the Norsemen. The sounds of the isolated fighting at points were dying out, and Syasi was preparing to advance and assist in the extermination of the enemy, when a shower of arrows, coming from the rear of her position, fell suddenly upon her troop. She turned to face this surprise, and what a spectacle met her eyes! The beach, seen through trees which divided the town from the sea, was black with men.

At sight of the Skrellings who rushed upon them like a flood, the natives took fright and fled in all directions. Vainly did Syasi strive to rally them; they disappeared in the woods. Her wisest course would have been to imitate them, to rejoin the fighting force at a distance, and form a compact body with them, but the warlike instinct of the North held her to the post of danger. Her troop fought splendidly, strewing the earth with corpses, but their assailants were too numerous; they swarmed into the town, overflowed it, and were already crowding into the woods to attack Hervador in the rear. Then, all resistance became impossible; nevertheless, not a man forsook his post, and each one sold his life dearly. One by one the champions of Syasi fell beneath the hail of arrows and stones. She was the last to fall,

she, the fair, valiant woman, and her death-cry rang mournfully over the plain.

In the forest mazes the strife was vigorously waged. There also the natives had given way before the impetuous attack of the Skrellings, and there, also, the Norsemen fell in their ranks, steady as rocks.

Night only put an end to the slaughter. Hervador, with a few survivors, retraced his steps to Syasis-Budir, which he easily found, for the town was burning like a gigantic straw-stack. Farther off, a still more ominous light reddened the face of heaven. The warriors tried to believe that they were the sport of an infernal vision; but the spectacle was only too real; they could not indulge in the brief luxury of doubt, their ship was burning! Their ship, their last hope—their sole salvation.

The little band of surviving warriors hurried towards the shore, but had only taken a few steps when the conflagration suddenly flung its inexorable glare upon the group of the dead. There they lay in a heap, men and women, fallen upon each other, and Syasi-the-Fair, calm and smiling, formed the summit of the ghastly pyramid.

Hervador flung himself down beside the beloved form. Alas! the pale lips made no answer to his frenzied appeal; the still eyes no longer reflected his gaze of anguish.

The courage of these war-hardened and great-

hearted men now gave way. Deep silence was around them. The immense void enwrapped them like an icy shroud. With mute lips, brooding eyes, and trembling arms they lifted their dead, and carried them to a grotto which they closed up with stones.

Then, without one backward glance, they went down to the water's edge, where they found some Eskimo canoes. These they cast loose, and paddled away in them, profiting by the last flickering light from the burning ship, which was presently swallowed up by the waves.

In time a few of the desolate voyagers reached Vinland once more, but they were the minority.

CHAPTER XVI.

BJORN KAPPI.

Hervador in Iceland. — The Monastery of Froda — The Mysterious Monk — Ary Marson's visit to the American coast and sojourn there of more than a year, after 987 — The Adventures of Bjorn Kappi — The Viginkars — The *Gode* of Helgafell.

How did the unfortunate husband of Syasi-the-Fair reach Iceland? This is an unsolved question. Did he arrive there on his frail skiff, borne by one of those mysterious currents which are now classified but were then esteemed providential? Or rather, did he obtain passage on board a ship under way for the former country of Erik the Red? In any case, we find Hervador, in 1056, in a monastery near Froda, the place that had been indicated by the chief of the white men.

No doubt he had gone thither to rejoin Kjartan and Thuride, so as to deliver up to them, if still living, the sword and the ring with which he had been entrusted by the mystic successor of Ary Marson. In any case, he must have endeavoured to bear news of that far-off exile to them, but nowhere had he met them.

Nevertheless, chance, which is so rich in surprises, was about to place the key to the mysteries with which his destiny had associated him, in his hands.

Among the religious in the monastery to which the former colonist of Syasis-Budir had resorted as a refuge for his grief-stricken spirit, there was one who spoke to none, and whom all avoided, in compliance with a rule laid down by himself. Hervador had frequently crossed his path under the arcades of the cloister, or, outside, on the land which was tilled by the holy men; but he had invariably passed him by, observing the rule. One day the old man addressed him:

"Is it true," said he, "that you have lived in lands beyond the sea, on the side where the sun sets?"

"It is true, father. Not only have I lived there a long time, but I was born there."

"Ah!—and in what place? For we have many settlements on that side, I have been told."

"In Vinland, father."

"Ah! I know, the country of the good wine. But it was discovered only fifty-six years ago, whilst I had landed long before, on a coast which our people had already visited."

Hervador bowed, and the old monk went on, after a momentary pause.

"It was in the year 994. We had sailed along coasts which none of us knew, and were ascending a

HERVADOR AND THE MYSTERIOUS MONK.

broad, deep river bordered with great trees such as we had not seen elsewhere. These banks were a delight to our eyes, and at each fresh turn of the river we cried aloud in admiration. At intervals we passed by superb meadow lands, which I can only compare to the banks of the Seine between Honfleur and Rouen. These led up to hills like the verdant crown of the capitol of Richard the Jarl, he of the lineage of Totnisch of Fornjotz — at least it was Richard, the grandson of Aroll, who reigned when I went into Normandy. Since then, his successors have conquered and taken possession of a neighbouring country * where I have also gone ashore, — a large island. Ah, well, the old blood of the sea-kings is not degenerate. But, let us return to our river.

"I had been ascending its course for a long time when I perceived a continuous sound coming from inland. It was like a waterfall and its roar increased as we advanced. Being naturally curious I stepped ashore after I had given orders to my crew not to leave our vessel, and I struck into the woods. What was my astonishment to come upon a hut, after I had gone a few steps. I pushed the door; it was not locked, and by the light of a blazing fire I saw a man with a fair beard, who rose on my approach. He was as much surprised as I was, and he examined me

* England

long and critically. Then he addressed me in our beautiful Norsk tongue. He spoke the language ill, being unused to hear or speak; still we understood each other. I asked him how long he had been in this country, and he replied that the shipwreck which had cast him upon the coast hard by was so far back an event as to be now no more than a speck in his mind.

"'I have grown old,' said he. 'My beard has grown white.'

"I assured him he was mistaken, and, in very truth, his beard was like yellow gold.

"He shook his head, with an air of doubt, and resumed:

"'I remember, however, that it was after a descent upon the Orkney Isles my *drakar* was wrecked. The ship had been carried away by a current which neither my sail nor my thirty oars could resist, and, after several days of suspense and privation, she struck upon a rock and went to pieces. The whole crew perished, and, all alone, I followed the course of the river which has brought you hither, now keeping close to the bank, again inland, through the woods and across the fields. At length I arrived at the place where we are now, in the vicinity of the sacred cascade whose voice you hear. My presence was quickly discovered; a great noise announced the approach of a crowd. I gave myself up for lost. What was my

surprise when I beheld a whole people gather reverently around and prostrate themselves before me!

"'I could not believe my eyes, and wondered what strange mistake could have led these people to worship me. I afterwards learned that a legend of the country foretold the coming of a living God whose thin white skin should permit the red blood to be seen running, and whose hair and beard, aurole-fashion, should resemble sun rays. That these people had taken me for the Messiah for whom they were looking was not surprising, for my blood was bright vermilion in those days, and my hair and beard were more golden than either is now, let you say what you will.'"

The growing interest with which Hervador listened to the old monk's story may readily be conceived, for he recognized the solitary of the hut in the riverside forest, and the god of whom the white chief of the glade of sacrifice had told him, as one and the same personage. How strange the chance — or rather what a singular current was that which had brought several men at various epochs to the same point of the mysterious coast!

The monk went on with his story.

"My host had completely lost the notion of time. It seemed to him that he had lived a whole life in this land which was so unlike his own country. He even wondered whether his own country existed, whether the warm rivers of the lands on which he had set

foot, and the wide seas with its foaming waves and its capricious currents, were not all a dream ; and at certain moments — his memory being somewhat clouded in consequence of his shipwreck and the loss of all who were his—he almost persuaded himself that he was in reality the immortal God whom thousands of people worshipped in his person. He was greatly surprised, when, having painfully consulted his memory, he told me that he had arrived in this country in 987. I informed him that the present year was 994, so that he had resided therein for seven years only. He could not get over this, and when I asked him what was his name — "

"He answered, Ary Marson," interrupted Hervador.

The old monk started.

"My son, where did you hear that name?" he inquired.

"In the country you are speaking of, father. It is at the back of a gulf. The river that waters it is, as you have said, broad, deep, and bordered by great trees, with hills and meadows behind them ; and when the course of the river has been ascended for some distance, the sound of a waterfall is heard in the distance — "

"Of a truth, you know the country, but, tell me, who spoke to you of Ary Marson?"

"His successor, father."

"A native chief, doubtless."

"No, a white man. A Scandinavian like him, like you, father."

"That is impossible. Ary Marson was the only white man who had ever been in the country. All his companions, I tell you again, had perished in the waves, and he was saved only by a miracle. And it was I who took him away the same night; for, when his mind became clear, he was impatient to get away, to behold the sea once more, to live his former life again. I set sail at once, and, thanks to the breeze that blew from the land, by dawn of day the country in which Ary Marson had reigned as king and priest lay behind us, a mere streak of blue. The brave mariner was out of sight of the people who had worshipped him but also held him captive. However, in the end, the recovery of his liberty profited him but little. A few days later heavy weather fell upon us, and he was among those whom the stormy deep claimed as tribute."

In return for this revelation, Hervador gave the old monk an exact account of his adventures in the "Land of the White Men." He recounted the strange ceremony which he had witnessed, the coming of the chief of Icelandic origin, his words, his recollections of Ary Marson, and, lastly, his careful concealment of his identity. The sole indication which could be connected with this was the sword

and the ring which he had confided to Hervador, charging him to remit them to Kjartan, a settler at Froda, and to Thuride, his mother.

"Did he add nothing?" asked the old monk eagerly.

"On my pressing him, he authorized me to say that those rich gifts came from one who was more friendly to the lady of Froda than to her brother, the *gode* of Helgafell."

At these words the old man fell into deep meditation. When he roused himself, his eyes were full of tears.

"My son," he said, "you have known one of the best of men. His history is that of a true knight, and I will relate it to you. Before he became what you have seen him, Bjorn Kappi, that is to say Bjorn the Athlete, was tall, handsome, brave 'as his sword,' and, moreover, he was a poet; now that has never been reckoned against a man in our country. He owed his reputation not so much to his great stature, his handsome face, and his indomitable courage, as to his adventures with the *gode* of Helgafell.

"The *gode*, that is to say the magistrate of Helgafell, had a sister, the beautiful Thuride, who was betrothed to Marstan, a settler at Froda and a prince of Iceland. This alliance was a great honour for the family of Thuride, and the *gode* confidently expected to be promoted to the highest dignity. As

for the people of the humble hamlet of Helgafell, heretofore reckoned among the least important in the country, they were beside themselves with joy, and dreamed of municipal franchises just like the privileged dwellers in great centres.

"Thuride only did not share the general gladness; not that Marstan was wanting in loverlike warmth, but because she lamented in anticipation her quiet life at the paternal fireside, where she passed her days amid her companions and her evenings at the spinning-wheel, singing old songs. Nevertheless, she pledged her word to the prince, and their betrothal was solemnly celebrated at Helgafell.

"During the fêtes in honor of this event, Bjorn saw Thuride. The beauty of the young girl made a great impression on his mind, and he extolled her merits and her charms in tender verse which was not to everybody's liking. The prince had set out again for Froda, and it was the *gode* of Helgafell who undertook to get rid of the gentle poet. He was concerned for his own interests, his prospect of high fortune, and he had no notion of allowing his sister, whose betrothal had already been accomplished, to break off the projected alliance in order to marry an adventurer whom fate had thrown in her way.

"It was quite true that Bjorn sought every opportunity of meeting Thuride and speaking to her. Thuride avoided him; she was well aware of her

duty and that she was bound by the pledge she had given to Marstan; and, besides, she was secretly alarmed for Bjorn, who was incurring grave risk, for she knew her brother — she had good reason — and knew him to be capable of any and every evil deed.

"She confided her fears to the poet, but he only laughed at them; and, as they strolled that day beneath the sunbathed trees, — she, full of dread, he, full of light-hearted courage, — he said to her:

"'Goddess of the golden thread, shall we not desire the sun, forgetful of the hours, to linger yet upon the valley?'

"But Thuride insisted upon his leaving her, and he was obliged to yield.

"His way lay through the woods, and he had gone but a few yards when he fell into the hands of his enemies, who were lying in wait for him. He defended himself valiantly against the ruffianly band, whom he put to flight; and, as their leader was making off more quickly than the others, he called out to him:

"'*Gode* of Helgafell, you find it easier to condemn an innocent man than to fight a brave one.'

"The *gode*, for he it was, made no answer, but continued to run. His goodly enterprise having failed, there remained only one means of getting rid of Bjorn. In the tussle one of the assailants had been killed. This enabled the *gode* to lay hands —

the hands of justice — upon the person whom he had intended to assassinate."

Here the old monk paused; he had uttered the last few sentences tremulously. A mist passed before his eyes, and he covered them with his hand; but he promptly controlled himself and continued:

"Bjorn was tried before the *Thudg* of Thorsues, and, notwithstanding the defence made for him by the sons of Thorlak, who had witnessed the adventure and knew that everything had been fair and honourable on his part, at least, he was condemned to pay the price of blood, and to banishment from Iceland for three years.

"He left the country with rage in his heart, for while he was departing Prince Marstan was arriving, to meet his fair betrothed."

Here again the monk paused, evidently contending with painful thoughts. At length he resumed:

"Others would have passed their time of exile at the Court of Norway, or that of some other monarch who loved pleasure and good cheer; but Bjorn believed that the gods had inflicted this period of trial upon him for his strengthening in both body and soul. In place of the life of a palace he chose the roughest and hardest of all, that of the Viginkars, those celebrated pirates who had been the terror of the Northern Seas from the earliest times.

"The Viginkars, whose place of abode was in the Island of Wellin, at the mouth of the Oder, were subjected to very severe rules. Before a candidate could be admitted to the community of pirates, he had to prove by credible witnesses that he had never refused a challenge; then he pledged himself never to reveal secrets concerning the order to any but their supreme head. The Viginkars formed one of those secret societies which already existed over the greater portions of the Western and Eastern countries, and it surpassed in severity those other societies which have made the world tremble at their names. The members fought like lions at a sign, utterly regardless of danger, and jested with death under the very sword of the headsman. Among the most valiant of the Viginkars was Bjorn, and hence his surname of Kappi.

"Everything in this world comes to an end, however, and the three years having passed away, Bjorn returned to Iceland, and settled in his natal town —"

"At Kambi, in the Thing district," interrupted Hervador.

"How do you know?"

"Because he told me."

"True. I forget that you have seen him, that you have spoken with him. Yes, he settled at Kambi in the first instance, but his longing to see Thuride again soon became irresistible. At a fête in

the princely palace of Froda, Bjorn met the princess; she was then the mother of a fair son, Kjartan, whose golden curls hung around a throat like a young bull's. Bjorn drew near, took the child in this arms, and holding him up to the guests, he foretold in fair verses, well and duly scanned, a knightly future for the boy. The guests had drank deep, and the *gode* of Helgafell, whose enmity against his former adversary was as keen as ever, took his noble action ill. In the absence of Thuride's husband, who was visiting the Norwegian Court, he resolved to get rid of the lord of Kamb, this time, once for all, and, without waiting for the end of the entertainment, he retired, accompanied by several of his followers, and posted himself at a place which Bjorn would have to pass.

"'I don't want to fight him at his dwelling-place,' the *gode* told his men. 'It is fortified and well defended. Our enemy is a host in himself, and, even with our superior strength, success is not certain. So then, we will wait for him here. You, Markof, my kinsman, shall strike the first blow; do your best to make it the last also, for you know it is tough work to fight with a wolf if you don't begin by killing him.'"

"At that moment, Bjorn came towards the spot where the assassins were stationed. He was armed only with his sword; its hilt shone in the moonlight.

On arriving at the thicket in which the confederates were ambushed, he stopped short, and called out, in a loud resounding voice :

"'Thorfinn Sigurdson, jarl of the Orkneys, if you be not a felon knight, throw off your mask, your false name, your position as a judge, and come out loyally and manfully to do battle with him on whom you seek vengeance.'

"At this summons, Thuride's brother came forth from his hiding-place.

"'Wretch!' he cried, 'do not utter that name. None here know it, and you, how have you learned it?'

"Then Bjorn answered him, with gibe and mockery :

"'If the *gode* of Helgafell had not condemned the lord of Kamb to banishment, the exile would have had no occasion to pass by way of the Orkneys in going to join the Viginkars, and he would have never learned that the *gode* of Helgafell is no other than the former jarl of the Orkneys, who was cast out by his country for crime and treason. . . . If I lie, may Thor break my sword so that I be delivered, weaponless, into your hands.'

"'Your sword shall not hinder mine from finding the way to your life.'

"'That's well. Bid your followers withdraw, and come on.'

"The *gode* made a sign, and the others withdrew to a distance.

"Then there ensued between these two men an encounter worthy of the heroic age. Sparks from their bare blades flew into the blue night like specks of golden grain, and the quick reëchoed clash of steel sounded as though several combatants were engaged in the conflict as the adversaries pressed upon each other with fire in their eyes, foam on their lips, and swollen arms. They seemed to be no longer two, but one only; their breath mingled, they uttered one blended cry, strident, fierce, implacable. It rose above every other sound; and then there fell a great silence. The *gode* lay bleeding on the earth. His followers, headed by Markof, ran to his assistance, but he pushed them away.

"'Go to your homes,' he said, roughly. Then, turning his head towards Bjorn:

"'The gods have given judgment, — my life belongs to you.'

"'No, no, comrade; it is yours. You have done bravely, and I love the brave. What do you require of me? I swear to do your bidding.'

"'That would be above your strength.'

"'Speak! Nothing shall be too hard for me.'

"'I desire — you understand me — peace for my sister, Thuride.'

"'And to procure that peace for her, what must I do?'

"'You must go away forever.'

"The lord of Kamb did not hesitate for a moment.

"He replied:

"'Thorfinn Sigurdson, I will go away to-morrow without having seen Thuride, without having kissed the child whom I had taken into my heart. I swear to you, never more shall you hear tell of me.'

"And, in very truth, the next day he departed. I have never seen him since."

"What, father! You are —?"

"The former *gode* of Helgafell."

"Allow me to call you by another name, to salute in you the sovereign —"

"Silence! The good religious among whom I have sought forgiveness and oblivion know not and never shall know whom I am."

"And Thuride?"

"Dead."

"And her son, Kjartan?"

"Dead also."

"And how do you explain Bjorn Kappi's having landed after you upon the shores beyond the sea?"

"He must have sailed far and long in search of unknown coasts, like a true Viginkar. As for me, I took to the sea to drive away the black thoughts and the remorse that beset my spirit, and I forestalled him in the land of the sunset. You, here, you are

the bond which brings us together. God has pardoned me."

So speaking, the old monk lowered his cowl over his pallid face and resumed his walk beneath the arcades.

Never again did Hervador hear the sound of his voice.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BISHOPS.

Europe becomes interested in the transatlantic lands. — Bishop Jonus in Greenland. — He goes to Vinland in 1059. — He comes to his death there. — A bishop pirate. — Erik Upsi. — The baptistery at Newport. — Madoc ap Owen sails to America with an entire fleet from Wales, in 1170.

In the meantime Vinland was becoming known in Europe.

The king of Denmark, Svend Estrithson, had frequently held discourse with his friend and confidant, Adam de Brême, concerning the shores beyond the sea, far, far away in the west, where the climate was more genial than in Normandy, hitherto regarded as the pearl, the rose, the "love apple" of Scandinavian conquest; and the famous chronicler had scrupulously recorded that discovery in order to transmit its wonders to posterity. To say sooth, posterity cared very little about them.

In Norway, the transatlantic colonies were regarded as a storehouse of plenty, from whence the mother country drew all except the wine, — that was consumed on the spot, — precious woods, furs, seals'

tusks, and whale oil. The several kings were stirring in the matter of these rich regions, and, urged by the covetousness of their courtiers, had declared their intention to unite them by administrative and fiscal bonds to their respective crowns. They actually did nothing of the kind, happily, and their inaction secured the prosperity of Vinland — provisionally, at all events.

At length, Gudrid had carried the "good news" to Rome, where note was taken of the information she gave. According to Thorfinn's widow, no country was more favourable to the spread of the Christian faith. The apostolic zeal of the precursor, Leif Erikson, inherited by Thorwald and his successors, had wonderfully prepared the ways and straightened the paths of the Church, and Leifs-Budir was the point indicated for the establishment of a bishopric.

The Roman-Curia lent a favourable ear to these representations, and, precise information having been obtained from Gudrid, a prelate was despatched from Rome to organize religion on a practical basis in the New World. Before he reached that unknown region of the planet he made many a long halt. At first he exercised his episcopal authority in Norway, and preached the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman faith in remote places wherein numbers of adherents of the old gods, fleeing from the persecution of Olaf Trygvason and his successor, Olaf the Holy, had sought

refuge, being resolved to preserve the traditions and the heroic legends of their forefathers intact. Then, after having vainly endeavoured to bring those recalcitrant sheep into the fold, and feeling that he could not spare any more time from the more direct purpose of his mission, Jonus, for this was the apostle's name, proceeded to Iceland, where his lucky star ensured him the hospitality of the Monastery of Froda.

There he met Hervador, who gave him all the information he required concerning Vinland and the Land of the White Men, not omitting the history of Bjorn Kappi, as he had received it from the jarl Thorfinn Sigurdson, who had recently died.

Gudrid, also, conferred with the prelate. She completed the instructions which he had received from Syasi's husband, especially concerning Vinland and the Straum-Fjord, and she strongly urged the Roman envoy to go by way of Greenland, where he would find a number of fighting men and sailors who had made the "beyond sea" voyage, and would guide him in the accomplishment of his mission.

Jonus then departed for Brattehilde, being prepared by Gudrid's report to enjoy its renowned hospitality. But, when he arrived there, Leif had just died. He was the last of the glorious lineage of Erik the Red, and his closed house seemed to be in mourning for its ancient pomp and splendour.

Dead, too, were his companions and those of his brethren.

The business transactions between Greenland and Vinland had become less regular, and were now exclusively in the hands of Vinland settlers who visited Greenland from time to time, and departed so soon as they had disposed of their cargoes.

Some time after the arrival of the bishop one of the ships from Vinland came in. Jonus questioned the sailors who formed the crew, but received only short and reserved replies. The men informed him that they were all right among themselves in Vinland and did not like people to come there for interested purposes, under the pretext of visiting them. The bishop, without revealing his rank, assured them that he was neither a trader, a hunter, nor even a wine grower or agriculturist, but a simple, homely man of peace and mercy, whose sole object was to strengthen and confirm their countrymen in the religion which their fathers had adopted.

On learning this, the Vinlanders looked at one another in great surprise, but preserved an obstinate silence, from which nothing availed to move them. They would not even give Jonus an answer to his request to be taken on their ship, and it was only when he displayed a well-filled purse that he succeeded in inducing them to listen to him. They consented to give the bishop a passage, but, while

he was on board, their attitude remained unchanged. They went about their ordinary business, and took no more notice of their passenger than if he did not exist.

On reaching land, they disembarked and went off to their affairs ashore. Jonus, not knowing what to do with himself in his isolation, roamed about the village of Leifs-Budir, where not a door was opened to him. The people looked at him as he passed by with some curiosity, but turned their backs when he drew near to speak to them. Certain of the settlers, however, began to regard the perambulating stranger in the strange attire with uneasiness and suspicion. The bishop had assumed his pontifical vestments before landing. Trusting to the information he had received from Gudrid, he believed that his presence would produce a profound impression upon this people, whose Christian fervour and good feeling she had highly praised. In order to add solemnity to his arrival among them, and more deeply to impress his future flock, he resolved to present himself to them with all the attributes of his rank. But the Vinland of 1059 was no longer the Vinland of Thorfinn and Gudrid. Freydize, the pagan, had been there, and many another after her, and the worship of Odin had been reëstablished.

Thor, Balder, Frigga, Freya, and Vala now reigned over Vinland; and, as the whole of Scandinavian

BISHOP JOUNS IN LEIFS – BUDIR.

religion consisted in the worship of those deities, Jonus was arrested on suspicion of hostility to them, examined, and promptly offered in sacrifice to the gods of Valhalla.

So perished the first bishop whose foot trod the American soil. The fate of Jonus failed, however, to dishearten the apostles who were charged in the name of the great Christian family to conquer the mysterious regions lying beyond the vast sea which had hitherto been regarded as limitless. Other prelates succeeded him and, like him, were sacrificed. At length, in 1157, Erik Upsi, being resolved to avenge these victims of fierce fanaticism and to reëstablish their pristine faith among the inhabitants of Vinland, set out for that country, not as a peaceful missionary predestined to the martyr's crown and palm, but as a prelate-pirate, a true sea-king of the celestial realm, carrying the cross in one hand and his boarding-axe in the other.

His crew were fit for the work cut out for them; they were fighting men ready for anything, fanatic sailors greedy for reprisals. They landed like executioners in the country, where, in the past, the love-songs of Aulaf and the gay talk of the guests of Leif the Lucky had filled the jocund air. What took place? By what means did it come to pass that Vinland was "gentled" to such a degree that Erik Upsi relinquished his bishopric of Gardar to devote

himself exclusively to his diocese beyond the sea? The Icelandic monks are silent on this subject. They confine themselves to stating the fact, while extolling the virtues of the prelate from Greenland and boasting of the wide extent of his teaching and influence.

Vinland had grown considerably. Its inhabitants had formed settlements in the neighbouring islands and on several points of the coast. The centre of its activity seems to have been changed, and fixed at Rhode Island, and the result of all this was a real transatlantic kingdom, fit to become a model diocese.

For the purpose of its more complete organization, the bishop, Erik Upsi, took up his abode at the southern point of Rhode Island, near the place where the town of Newport now stands. From thence he had the northern portion of his sphere of action under his hand, at the same time that he overlooked the coasts of Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, the Norsemen having spread into all these regions. The "White Men" had been driven back, and to them were given up the rich lands in the vicinity of Washington and Richmond. If the Skrellings did not yet hold Florida, although their invading movement had already carried them towards Mexico, they at least occupied the coasts on the oceanic side at this period.

Upsi visited these various sections of his diocese, whose inhabitants had resorted in the first place to

his episcopal residence to receive baptism at a baptistery which is still to be seen, and is now known in the country under the name of the Stone Mill, which was bestowed upon it by the first governor of Rhode Island in 1638. It is a handsome building, rotunda-shaped, raised on eight arches which rest on eight pillars, each twenty-four feet high (English), and is used at the present time as a storehouse for forage.

The administration of Erik Upsi diffused well-being and prosperity throughout the entire region under his authority. His renown was wide-spread, and adventurers, attracted by the riches to be acquired beyond the seas, came in on all sides. They arrived from Iceland, Norway, Denmark. Even Ireland sent her sons to swell the ranks of the settlers, and Wales, entirely unaided, equipped a whole fleet whose destination was America, in 1170. The Welsh bard, Meredith, has transmitted to the ages the recital of this bold adventure, undertaken in 1170, in one of his poems. It is important to record that the bard composed this poem fourteen years before the expedition of Christopher Columbus.

After the death of Owen Gwynneth, the poet relates, the sons of that great chief disputed his appanage in arms. The quarrel lasted long and there was much bloodshed on both sides. At last, the younger, Madoc ap Owen, weary of this fratricidal war, not only yielded, but, in order to escape

from temptation, equipped several ships "so that he might see new lands."

Leaving Hibernia in his wake, and after a long sail, during which his pilots steered steadily to the west, he arrived at regions where no European was to be found, and where "he saw many admirable things."

Madoc left one hundred and twenty men in the new country, which he described as "agreeable and fertile, and ready to receive those who should desire to escape from the horrors of civil war." When he had persuaded many persons, "he equipped ten ships, provisioned them with all that was necessary for the establishment of a colony, embarked a great number of men and women who bewailed the woes of Wales, and said farewell to his country forever."

What became of those ten ships? Their fate never was known. Did they arrive at a safe haven? Were they wrecked on the voyage? The last supposition is the most probable.

In any case, it is evident from Madoc's expedition that enterprises of this kind were frequent in those days.

Old Europe, intent upon its Crusades and its internal conflicts, troubled itself not at all concerning what was happening beyond its shores. Our Norsemen themselves were drawn into the whirl of conquest, and dazzled by the mirage of oriental

splendour; they rushed into the *mêlée*, eager for spoil, indeed, by nature, but also inspired by the spirit of chivalry which they welcomed eagerly when it spread to them.

The time was approaching, however, when Ragnar Lodbrok, Ogier the Dane, and Hastings were to sail up the rivers, sacking and pillaging as they went, unchecked in their ruthless devastation. They rode into the heart of the country on horses taken from the peasants. They burned towns and monasteries. The fields were left bare and desolate. Actually, waste places were common. A chronicler, who was an eye-witness, tells us the traveller might journey on for leagues without seeing smoke from a chimney or hearing the bark of a dog.

Then came a new and daring invasion. Hroll, or Rollo, the terrible Norwegian, appeared in the Seine. Bishop Guy went to meet him at Jumiéges and brought back words of peace. Nevertheless, terror reigned at Rouen, and was intensified by the intelligence that bands of marauders who had landed from Rollo's ships were ravaging the banks of the river. In the distance, the sky was red with incendiary fires. Castles, monasteries, whole villages were ruthlessly destroyed. The people took refuge in the churches, and the litanies included a fresh supplication: *A furore Normanum, libera nos, Domine.*

The *Sea Dragon* appeared at the Courbe de

Cauteleu, flying on the sea "carried along by her two white sails, like wings."

The bark of the dreaded chief led the way, his fighting men shouting and brandishing their weapons. Rollo came ashore.

He was easily to be recognized by his majestic features, his glance of fire, his gigantic stature. He strode towards the basilica, ready to give the signal for slaughter, for which his crew were waiting impatiently. But, lo! when he confronted the bishop, who appeared at the head of his clergymen under the porch where tall tapers were burning, in sacerdotal robes, his warlike ardour suddenly subsided. That simple spectacle touched his heart and enlightened his mind; the city was saved, and the country was once more to arise from its ashes.

The era of rapine had come to an end. Even as the Norsemen had been up to this time typical marauders and destroyers, they now became protectors of the rights of each and all. Property was safe, security reigned everywhere, and, in proof of this, the golden bracelets, which were hung in the forest of Roumare by Rollo's command, remained on the trees, untouched.

All was suddenly changed in the new land of Normandy. Rollo displayed marvellous powers of organization. He established the reign of justice, reformed the morals and manners of his compatriots,

remedied the disasters his soldiery had caused, rebuilt the monasteries they had burned, and, like an old salt as he was, gave his attention to maritime affairs, so that under his reign a mercantile marine took the place of the fighting fleet. The Nantes, or Rouen mariners, carried on the commerce of the lower Seine, and the former sea-kings, turned into traders, carried Burgundian wines and *crapois* (by this name oil-producing fish were known) to London.

The successors of the first Duke of Normandy continued his work of civilization and commercial expansion. Duke William forbade the hindering in any way of the dealings of merchants, who could travel with their belts full of gold without any fear of molestation. A breath of peace and calm blew softly over the land; no man durst kill another, no matter how greatly he might have been injured. Lastly, the traders of Rouen were renowned for their integrity. "It is a species of crime among the Normans," relates a Burgundian chronicler, "to sell a thing above its value."

As time went on, the field of this commercial activity was widely extended, at first on account of the English occupation and afterwards owing to distant expeditions. Even before the Crusades, Norman ships passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean Sea to reach the African and Asiatic coasts and procure the products

of the East; and when the "seigneurs" of Normandy, adorned with their armorial bearings and clad in glistening armour, went to fight in Sicily, at Constantinople, and in the country of the Holy Places, the merchant fleets followed them, to carry back precious stuffs, exquisite perfumes, and spices, the current coin of the Middle Ages, from these distant latitudes.

All Europe became intoxicated by these expeditions which widely diffused wealth and the love of luxury, also the sense of colour, form, and beauty. The Mediterranean, covered with treasure-laden fleets, was like a fairy-haunted lake, and, on the return from the Crusades, castles and cottages alike boasted certain corners in which the magnificence of the East was reflected.

Afterwards came Africa to stimulate the taste for far-off adventures. Under Charles V., the Dieppe seamen reached the coast of Guinea, and brought back gold-dust and ivory. Then there was a general stir. Africa, it seemed, was to replace the East; but the Dieppe men were practical persons; they did not tell their sea secrets. They enjoyed the fruits of their discoveries without giving any information to the Government, which was too busily engaged in those days in repressing the pretensions of the great nobles to pay attention to what others were doing.

Their navigation became more and more extensive,

and the profits of their return voyages would have been immense if their merchandise had not been made to pay a "ransom" on landing, for the nobles, dwelling in their fortified castles, seized upon everything that came within their reach. And, besides, there was fighting everywhere. Europe was one vast battle-field, the tongue of the tocsin was "aye wagging" in all the bell towers, and incendiary fires flung their sinister light over the fields far and wide.

In such a state of things, it is not surprising that no attention was paid to transatlantic expeditions. They were not known, indeed, and so well has time kept the secret that, according as we advance in this history of unknown America, we are more and more frequently obliged to refer back to our proofs to assure ourselves that we are not under a delusion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE END OF VINLAND.

In 1261, Norway effects the union of the Scandinavian States beyond seas to the Crown. — The Roman tithe, established in 1279, is still paid in 1307. — The Plague. — The Pirates. — In 1389, the last of the settlers give up the colony and, much reduced by calamities of all sorts, return to Europe.

Rome, however, did not lose sight of the American colonies, and in order to make her footing in them more secure after the death of Erik Upsi, which was succeeded by a period of danger to the cohesion which that exceedingly able organizer had established, the Papacy availed itself of Norway. All the advantages that might accrue from the annexation of those rich colonies to the Norwegian crown were fully explained by papal emissaries.

The old king, Hako IV., was entirely devoted to the Sovereign Pontiff, who had sent him a Cardinal-Legate commissioned to complete the work of Christian assimilation in his kingdom, and hastened to respond to the wishes of the sagacious Rainaldo de Seigni, known in history under the name of Alexander IV. In order to meet the views of His

Holiness to the best of his ability, Hako selected a prince of the Church, Bishop Olaf, in 1261, to bring about the union of the Scandinavian States beyond seas to the Norwegian crown.

The prelate accomplished his mission conscientiously, and availed himself at the same time of his diplomatic quality to get up a strong movement in favour of the Egyptian expedition which the king of France, Louis IX., was already preparing, although he had only just escaped from Damietta. He made proselytes, carried out the political programme of the King of Norway, and also brought back information of a nature favourable to the establishment of Tithe in these distant provinces, from his voyage.

The information obtained and imparted by Bishop Olaf was not thrown away. By a brief, given at Viterbo and bearing date the 4th of December, 1276, Pope John XXI. commissioned the Archbishop Jou to organize the collection of his transatlantic revenues. But this prelate was old ; he did not care to expatriate himself, especially under such conditions. He, therefore, requested the Holy Father to spare him so long and perilous a voyage, and contented himself with despatching in his stead "a wise and discreet person" to collect the tithes and the sums due as "commutations of vows" in the diocese of Gardar, as well as in *the neighbouring lands and islands.*

Three years later, this "wise and discreet person"

returned with a valuable cargo of precious woods, furs, and whalebone, contributed by the Greenlanders and Vinlanders united. This subsidy was continued at intervals of ten years until 1307, when the Vinland tithes ceased to figure among the results of the pontifical collections. In 1418, however, Greenland still paid 2,000 pounds weight of walrus tusks annually to the Holy See under the head of Tithe, or Peter's-Pence.

What had occurred during that period? Sanguinary encounters with the Skrellings, who were driven out of the South and had retreated towards the North, had taken place. By these, the Vinlanders had suffered severely; their numbers were thinned, their settlements were sacked, laid waste, indeed, destroyed for a long time. Nevertheless, after the departure of those swarming pests, trade revived. The Europeans and the Americans of the North kept up a perpetual interchange of traffic. Never had a commercial era so prosperous a beginning.

It was in 1347 that a terrible scourge fell upon the two continents simultaneously, and it lashed them both until 1351, both years inclusive. Its name was the Black Death. In Europe it decimated, in America it almost entirely annihilated the population. Then came pirates who, being successfully driven away from Norway and Iceland, destroyed the colony of Greenland, already languishing behind

the wall of ice which, heaped up by the ages around the land now forsaken, clasps it close in cold and jealous ward, isolating it from the rest of the world. The skimmers of the sea came down, by the classic route of Newfoundland and Markland, upon the settlements of Vinland and its dependencies, and shamelessly and wantonly pillaged them for the mere love of pillage.

Lastly, the final blow was dealt to her children beyond the seas by the mother-country, Norway herself. The dynasty of the Folkungs had come to an end, and Queen Margaret of Waldemar was achieving the union of the three Scandinavian kingdoms in the person of her son, the Pomeranian, by annexing the far-off countries, which owed their good fortune to their independence. This foreign woman resolved, in a Draconian spirit, that the monopoly of the transatlantic trade should be hers. She declared Vinland a domain of the Crown, in 1389, and in order that none might entertain an idea of opposing her will, she forbade merchant ships to touch there under the severest penalties "unless proof be given that it has been impossible for them to resist the strength of the winds and the masses of ice which float on the waters."

This, then, was ruin, final and definite. The last settlers, subjected to the exactions of the taxing-officers, gave up the game. They freighted their

ships with all that they had ready to hand, and, without a backward glance, in anger and discouragement, they set sail for Europe.

So ended the America of the year of grace 1000. It had lasted for exactly three hundred and eighty-nine years.

Part III.

AMERICA REDISCOVERED AT THE END OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER XIX.

NORTHERN EXPEDITIONS.

Henry Sinclair, Viceroy of the Orkneys, afterwards King of the Faroe Islands. — He associates Nicolo Zeno, the Venetian, with his fortunes. —The latter sends for his brother, Antonio. — "The Brothers Sutlers."—Exploration of the Greenland Coast. — The Monastery of Saint Thomas.

It was ordained, however, that the transatlantic land which had belonged to Europeans for well-nigh four hundred years should still be visited by them until the period of its final occupation by Christopher Columbus. No sooner had the last Norseman quitted the coasts of the countries beyond the sea, which had now become uninhabitable, than a son of the same race, moved by the same spirit of adventure, and as destitute of information respecting those far-off lands as was Leif, the Lucky, in his time, embarked upon the ocean, ostensibly to sweep away

the pirates who infested it, but in reality to imitate them at every opportunity.

Henry Sinclair, a descendant of one of the followers of William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, being heartily tired of lazy and luxurious life at the English Court, had gone to seek his fortune in Scotland, the listed field of all the combatants of the North. But Scotland proved too limited for his unbounded energy, and he embarked for the Orkneys, then in dispute between two pretenders in arms, Weyland of Ard and Malis Spere.

Sinclair promptly brought the rivals to an agreement by beating them both, one after the other, and seizing upon their domain. In 1379, the King of Norway confirmed him in the possession of the prize, and thenceforth he bore the title of Sovereign — Count of the Orkneys; in addition to that of Baron of Roslin, which he inherited from his father.

But even there, this knightly personage, a true child of the sea-kings, could not find enough to satisfy his reckless mind, always athirst for novelty. He looked around him on all sides, but no adventure worthy of him presented itself. The heroic times had passed away. The Crusades, which had afforded an outlet to the spontaneous impulse of European turbulence for more than two centuries, now survived only in the memory of men. Nothing remained of the Kingdom of Robert Guiscard. The

Hohenstauffens occupied the place of the Hautevilles. The last of the Normans who had escaped the Sicilian and Italian massacres had scattered themselves over the African coasts, where they practised piracy, in combination with the Turks, their recent enemies, and the Duchy of Normandy itself had been restored to the crown of France, in consequence of the changed policy of its later sovereigns, which drew them to England, that precious acquisition, which had been so dearly purchased, and was all important to preserve.

Thus the men of the North, who had played so considerable a part in the convulsions that had distracted Europe from west to east, during the three centuries which followed A. D. 1000, were now included among peoples who had either been conquered, or had mingled with other races. Such of them as would not consent to be numbered with either had retired to their boreal, frost-bound fastnesses, where, after the fashion of their ancestors, they lived the life of adventurers on land and sea-seizing ships and pillaging coasts.

From Finland to Greenland piracy reigned. Four of the most important Swedish fortresses had pirate governors. Archbishop Arendt Clemenssen practised maritime brigandage openly, and the sovereign of the Three United Kingdoms, Eric of Pomerania, bestowed his favour upon piratical adventure by

giving prizes to such ships as returned laden with spoil.

For lack of other outlet, Sinclair availed himself of this state of things. He bestowed upon himself the rank and character of Paladin of the Ocean Highways, and declared war to the whole pirate world. In his proclamation, he had announced himself as the protector of the weak and oppressed, but he soon forgot, or broke his pledges.

Under the pretext of reformation, he boarded all the ships, honest or dishonest, merchant or pirate, no matter what flag they carried, and laid hands impartially on the fair freight of the ship owner and the booty of the corsair. He descended on all the Scandinavian coasts in succession, and, finally, he appropriated entire countries, as though they were cargoes.

In 1380, it came to pass that a Venetian, one Nicolo Zeno, having been driven ashore on an island belonging to the Faroe group, then almost unknown, Sinclair hastened to the assistance of the unlucky mariner, no doubt with the intention of robbing him of the remnant of his goods. Zeno, happily for himself, had nothing left; but, in common with all the men of Venice, he possessed an extensive knowledge of the sea, and, in addition, his reputation for bravery had won him the post of Admiral of the Fleet of the Most Serene Republic,

in his early manhood. A personage of his quality was indisputably entitled to respectful consideration, and the impetuous Norman, perceiving immediately that such an associate would be of great value to him, at once put Zeno in command of his ships, reserving to himself descents on the coasts, and expeditions in the interior of the regions which were to be favoured with their visits. Owing to the adoption of this system, the Norman-Venetian fleet and army, operating in concert, easily subdued the natives who attempted to oppose their proceedings, so that the realm of the Baron of Roslin was enlarged in a short time, and with no great harm done, by the very considerable addition of the Faroe Islands.

Zeno was one of those Venetians who had been afforded opportunities for great adventures by the rivalry of the Italian maritime republics. The Italians, — latest comers on the gigantic scene of the oceans, — after having limited their action, for a long period, to the turbulent coasts of the East, had now taken to the vast "high seas," following the example of the Spaniards and the Portuguese. The era of great discoveries was at hand, its breath was in the air. Men's minds were disturbed by a vague perception of something afar, unknown, and their eyes scrutinized the horizon in quest of a new country. Some there were who came down along

the African shore, beating up about the islands nearest to the coast, and heaved the lead into the unknown, even to the Cape of Storms. Others took an upward course, coasted the cliffs of France in review, and, being curious to see frost and snow, — a singular fancy for men born in a warm climate, — they steered northwards, setting no limits to their intrepid enterprise. One of these daring adventurers was Zeno, who, having started for England, sailed on and on, until he found himself wrecked on a reef "in hyperborean seas," and, a fact still more strange, he took a liking for the "wild Northland." When he was about to undertake fresh expeditions with Sinclair, Nicolo Zeno wrote to his brother, Antonio, who had remained in their own country:

"If you wish to see the world, to have intercourse with divers nations, to make a famous name and a high position for yourself, follow the long route which I have taken, in the midst of many dangers, and have come through it, thanks be to God, safe and sound. I will receive you with the greatest joy, because you are my brother, both by blood and in valour."

Antonio hastened to respond to this summons. Following the example of his elder brother, he abandoned the pleasant ease and soft airs of his native land for the region of mist and ice-floes The meeting of the two Venetian brothers was

warmly affectionate, and Sinclair, henceforth the master of a fleet without an equal, hoisted the flag of the sea-rover.

His first proceeding was to declare war against the King of Norway, whose fleet the Zeno brothers destroyed off the coast of the Shetlands, not without considerable damage to their own. Then the Orcadian squadron, being reinforced by the remnant of the royal navy, who were readily converted to the doctrines and practice of piracy, systematically skimmed the sea, and spread terror broadcast. Little and great fled before it like fish at the approach of sharks, and, on land, the population scattered, panic-stricken, as soon as a sail was discerned on the horizon.

Hitherto, the piracy business * in the Northern seas had been in the hands of a nefarious fraternity, known as "The Brothers Sutlers" (*Frères vivandiers*). No coast, no ship was safe from their attack; but the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Orcadians left the brotherhood no choice but to submit, and take service under the flag of the conqueror, lest they should be devoured in their turn.

Supposing such a force had been employed a hundred years later, against the great movement which

* "*La Lourse*" — as one should say, "the highway," in the time of "gentlemen of the road."

impelled Europe towards the New World, what might it not have accomplished! But, in the time of Sinclair and the Zenos, the ocean still slept in its voluptuous, tropical limbo. The attention and the greed of explorers were fixed on the North, and Sinclair's predatory fleet acted in that direction only. In coasting around Iceland, he recognized the seven islands, named, respectively, Talas, Broas, Iscant, Trans, Mimant, Dambert, and Brès. No doubt, according to the information we possess respecting Iceland, these islands were only peninsulas, separated from each other by fjords as wide and deep as seas. Or those islands may have been afterwards soldered, so to speak, to the mainland; there would be nothing surprising in such an occurrence in a zone where volcanic phenomena, both terrestrial and submarine, were frequent. The Faroe Islands, for instance, in this century, — a period relatively near our own, — formed a continent, which has been broken up since then. Besides, we have to take into account that the cartographers of the period did as they liked with land and sea, covering the wastes with allegorical figures, and making wild mistakes concerning the extent of the newly discovered countries, in entire good faith.

On leaving Brès, Sinclair coasted Greenland, that promised land of the old Scandinavians, and examined its coasts "conscientiously." The extreme

point, if no more, of that country, which was very flourishing in those days, especially in the matter of commerce, was well worth visiting. This fact may seem extraordinary to us, but Bjorn Joneus, an ancient chronicler, mentions no less than one hundred and ninety towns in the Westerbygd, and ninety in the Easterbygd, in the south of Greenland, without reckoning twelve monasteries on the east, and four on the west, belonging to the bishopric of Gardar, in the same zone.

Sinclair and his crews laid hands upon the whole region, which never rallied from the effect of the invasion. They did not quit the unhappy land until they had completely sacked it, leaving not a barrel of oil or a walrus tusk; then, having procured accurate information, they steered their course for Nordstretur, on the western coast, where the wealthy Greenlanders were in the habit of passing the fine season.

The town of Greipar was regarded as the "pearl" of this pleasure-resort. The skalds lauded its beauties, and sang the praises of those fortunate ones of the earth, who, when summer was come, "braved the fearful tempest" to go a-hunting and a-fishing in this favoured region, "from which the star (sun) was visible at noon."

Several other places in Nordstretur vied with that fashionable watering-place, Kroksfiardarheidi among

them; but, in spite of its detractors, Greipar kept the position of first favourite, Greipar remained the Trouville, the Saint-Enogat of the "smart" world of Gardar and the Lysur-Fjord. Sinclair fell like a bombshell upon Greipar. The little "town" consisted of a group of wooden houses, prettily constructed, very "decorative," with their gabled fronts, striped with many-coloured bricks, topped by fantastic ornaments, which stood out day and night against the ever-glowing horizon. These dwellings communicated with each other, each being appropriated to a particular use, and the whole forming a sort of caravanserai, or, rather, phalanstery, where life was in common. The dwellers in Greipar slept in one quarter of the town, ate in another, and the rest was divided into kitchens, offices, and shops.

The whole was destroyed. Then the fleet sailed still higher up, past the 27° of north latitude, even to the Island of Women (Kingiktorsoak) near Tessuisak, where the northernmost house on the globe stands to-day.

There the fleet came to a pause, and, reversing its course, rounded Greenland again, and bore down upon the east coast, which had rich spoil in store for it. This navigation was not all plain sailing, however. One day, in very calm weather, the ships were shaken suddenly, like nuts in a sieve, then dashed against each other, and flung off in confusion, roll-

ing about like balls on a billiard-table, while colossal waterspouts were flung up from the sea, and fell down in heavy masses upon the rigging. In the distance thunder rolled, strange lights flashed through the tempest-laden clouds, the decks were swept, at intervals, by a hail of pumice-stones. Fire-balls fell, also, and the cataclysm struck terror to the stout hearts of the sailors, well used though they were to danger and distress.

Then, all of a sudden, the fleet was sailing upon a warm, almost a hot sea, which formed deep gulfs, fjords of remarkable placidity, revealed, momentarily, by the movement of enormous tracts of floating ice, which were journeying towards milder regions, under the influence of the polar currents.

Favoured by a clearance in the swiftly speeding mass, while one ice-floe was drifting away to give place to the next, which could be seen to the northward, growing larger, and heading for them, the Norman ships passed through, in their full number, unharmed. Then they sighted a country covered with plants and herbage, and beyond it great rolling plains. On the edge of the coast stood some poor Eskimo huts, mere places of rude shelter from cold. But the blue smoke that issued from them proved that wood, a rare combustible in Greenland, was used there. This, then, was a privileged region, a curious phenomenon of the caprice of the earth, a

land of perpetual spring, and one of promise to the oncoming marauders.

To complete their surprise, the lookout man on the flagship, which sailed ahead of the fleet, descried an edifice of European aspect, at the back of the bay. This was a vast building, surmounted by a cross. Clearly, the invaders were in sight of a monastery, and, moreover, of a more important and wealthy monastery than any of those they had hitherto pillaged. Sinclair, having duly thanked God for this special favour, commanded his soldiers to make ready their arms. The whole force was quickly landed, and eager for the fray. In those times, monasteries, like castles, were defended, and the monks and friars were fully equal in valour and daring to the laymen-at-arms. Frequently, indeed, they were the attacking party, and then the men of God were found truly formidable.

This, however, was not the case with the inhabitants of the monastery of Saint Thomas, at the back of the bay of the same name, now separated from the world by a wall of ice, but then open for a part of the year. They were humble monks, wholly devoted to prayer and labour, who, despite the imposing appearance of their house, lived as anchorites, free from all earthly desires, and despising all worldly goods. When they saw the warlike troops of the Normans and Venetians ad-

"SINCLAIR INTERRUPTED HIM RUDELY."

vancing towards their monastery, they went out to meet them, and one, who was apparently their chief, spoke first, offering a courteous apology for the meagre welcome to which his poverty, but not his will, compelled him.

Sinclair interrupted him rudely. "Priest," said he, "we are used to these litanies. The false prophet has prompted your defence. I know that your monastery, like others that we have visited, contains treasures. Your church plate is golden, and your house plate is silver, your costly stained glass gives the pale sun the task of dazzling the eyes that might suspect your wealth; your granary, your cellars, and your offices are crammed with wheat, with beer, * and with victuals. All this we will take from you, because, as the minister of a God of humility, you have no right to keep any of the goods of this world. We accept your hospitality, provided it be such as befits our rank. My knights are all of high lineage, our crews hunger for good cheer, and thirst for strong drink. Therefore, ransack your stores, tap your barrels, empty your fish-ponds, squeeze your savings dry. So shall we feel yourselves at home with you, and when you and yours have nothing left but your skin and your bones, and scream for mercy under our scourges, when there remains not a tree nor a blade of grass,

* Cervoise (obsolete for beer).

not a walrus nor a bird, then, no doubt, we shall depart, bidding you farewell until next year."

The priest allowed Sinclair to finish his speech, and, when he had done, still kept silence for a while. At length he replied:

"Sir Knight, you imperil your soul for very little. I tell you again, we are poor, destitute of everything. Our sacred vessels are of wood. A wooden chalice receives our Lord day by day. His precious blood fills the emptiness of our cellars. Our windows are adorned solely with the ice-flora of our frosts, and our vassals, with whom we vie in charity, live, like ourselves, on such food as we can snatch from the waves, when there is a little time of thawing, from the reeds, when birds nest in them, from floating fragments of the ice-floes, which bring us bears and other beasts to eat in our extreme hunger."

Sinclair was not to be convinced by these plain words.

"Priest, you are deceiving me!" he cried. "This precocious spring, the warm breath of the beneficent breeze, those meadows, growing green, already, amidst the ice, tell us that yours is a rich country, where the sun gilds grain and ripens harvests year after year. You will do well to practise no more deceit on us. Retire, and make way for us, my people are impatient for refreshment."

The monk stood motionless.

"You talk of spring," he said, "and, in truth, it is spring that we now enjoy, but a spring without a morrow, a spring that is to have no summer. The sun shines upon us for a little while, a moment of the year, but not strongly enough, or for sufficient time, to ripen fruits, or to swell the ears of wheat. The damp grass surrounds us, it invades us, and no flower, save the lustreless and scentless copper rose, sheds its smile upon our land."

"Then why do you remain in this God-forgotten country?"

"To do penance, my son; to merit heaven by privation, to redeem the faults of those who brave the divine wrath. Ah! if I were young like you, if I still had health and strength, and if I were the master of such a fleet as yours, and the head of such an army as you command, I know what I would do. Instead of pillaging poor countries, attacking unfortunate fishing people, and insulting God by sacking His holy houses, I would seek truly great adventures; I would rediscover lands where summer has no ending, where the trees bear more fruits than leaves, where everything abounds in sap and life; and there, bending the knee before the Lord, while admiring Him in the work of His hands, I would lead a glorious and stainless life. I would send my name abroad over the whole universe, and my wealth, being placed at the service of just and

pious causes, should make of me the most powerful and renowned sovereign in the world."

Sinclair regarded the old monk, whose inspired eyes, alight with the fervour of his soul, contrasted strangely with his snow-white hair and beard, with profound astonishment.

"Eh! by God!" said he, "your scheme should be mine, if it were practicable. But what you talk of is a dream, a chimera, and, in the meantime, until a miracle turns it into a reality, it is simpler to go on with the expedition that has been begun, however meagre its results may be."

The monk was smiling now; something in his smile evoked a sort of golden vision in the soul of the Norman chief, and, as the old man said not a word, Sinclair cried out, eagerly:

"Speak, speak! you knew such a land?"

The monk nodded assent.

"You have been there?"

"Yes."

"You could find it again?"

"Perhaps."

"Then, by God, my father, if you speak truth, I swear by that cross you wear upon your breast that you shall have the richest monastery in all Christendom —"

"And that you will be its most assiduous penitent?"

"Yes, truly."

"Then, my son, bid your soldiers retire, and come with me to my humble retreat, to hear the narrative of my adventures. They are extraordinary, and I promise you that I will add no invention of my own, but relate the facts exactly as they occurred."

Sinclair answered by turning only to his followers, who did not at all understand such apparent shilly-shallying, and briefly ordering them to return to the fleet, where the Zeno brothers had been left in charge.

The troop of swash-bucklers received the command of the master with much grumbling; but, as his authority over his people was absolutely unlimited, they obeyed, and retired, clenching their hands in their anger and discomfiture. Sinclair disappeared under the vaulted passage which led to the monastery, attended by the little community whose coarse brown habits made an effective foil for his glistening suit of mail, blazoned with his arms, and his golden-crested helmet, with its snow-white plume.

CHAPTER XX.

FROM NEWFOUNDLAND TO THE GULF OF MEXICO.

The Adventures of the Superior of the Monastery of Saint Thomas. — In former times, this monk, whose name was Moël, and who was a fisherman, had visited several western regions, beyond the frequented seas. — In his narrative of an adventurous voyage, which included conflicts and cannibal scenes, it is easy to recognize Newfoundland and all the American coast, until the explorers reach a country which, from the description of its temples, its idols, and its customs, there is every reason to believe was Florida.

The monastery of Saint Thomas was a simple structure of wattles or lathes, with an outer casing of fitted planks, and the space between the two was securely filled up with resin, tow, and the skins of animals. It was very warm in the wooden house, and, especially, the tolerably spacious room appropriated to the prior, where logs, which would have been for Yule-tide anywhere else, were burning briskly under the mantel of a wide chimney.

When they were alone Sinclair and the monk seated themselves on two stools adorned with the monogram of Our Lord, intertwined with angels'

faces and demons' bodies. The prior, aware of his guest's impatience, began to relate his story without delay.

His name was Moël, and he considered himself an Icelander, although he had been brought up in the Faroe Islands. As a child, he had worn the immemorial tarred overall of storm-time, and the greased boots of the ship's boy. From that first stage he had passed on to the rank of able seaman, and taken service for the distant deep-sea fishing, which was more productive and also more dangerous.

Long had he sailed amid the ice-fields from one continent to the other, now to the west, anon to the east, engaged in the "small" as well as the "great fishing," taking the conger and the cod in nets, harpooning, on occasion, the whale or the sea-lion, and, at intervals, hunting the white bear or the walrus of the precious tusks with a spear.

Having "passed master" in due time, and being favoured by fortune, he got the command of a flotilla of four well-armed vessels, with which he did the "great fishing," and also some piracy, for he was not then the holy man he afterwards became, by any means.

Now, one day, when his squadron was chasing a merchant ship, it happened to him, as it had already happened to a number of navigators, some of whom are known to us, that he was carried away by a sud-

den current, which bore him straight to an unknown island and left the four ships stranded there.

The Freislanders gave the name of Estotiland, or "the country of the East" to this island, — which was probably Newfoundland, — because they believed it to form the advanced promontory of a continent, which they had not the curiosity to investigate. On it dwelt natives who bore no resemblance to the Skrellings or other inhabitants of the polar regions. Neither were they in any way like the type of the Norman race, that habitual conqueror of the northern zones. These people, of gentle aspect and manner, spoke a melodious language, which was unintelligible to the men of the North; but they indicated, by signs, that there was a country farther south where their foreign visitors might make themselves understood.

Moël and his companions continued their voyage in the direction of the southwest, following the line of the coast until they reached the mouth of a river, which the pantomime of the friendly islanders had led them to look for. They ascended this river, and were not a little surprised to perceive a considerable town, with regular buildings, and all the indications of a large population, at some distance. The chief of the expedition went ashore at the entrance of this riverside city, from whence the inhabitants, greatly surprised and excited by the arrival of the Freisland

barks, came down in a crowd to get a near view of them and their crews.

The natives whom he had met at first were mistaken in supposing that Moël would be able to make those of the more southern region understand his language. Again the foreigner had to be content with dumb show, but he was presently conducted to the presence of an individual who was evidently regarded with veneration.

This man, who was white-skinned and fair-haired, spoke a Northern language which enabled him to converse with Moël, although it was not that of the Faroe Islands. In addition to the local dialect, he also used a particularly fine and sonorous kind of speech in reading aloud from a thick book with heavy gold edges and clasps, which was richly illuminated in bright colours. He was, in fact, a learned "clerk," the minister of a religion unknown to Moël, who was, however, attracted to it at once by the grave and tender serenity of the holy man's countenance and bearing.

After he had courteously questioned the stranger, the good priest took Moël to have audience of the king, for this island of Estotiland, "the country of the East," possessed a king, who was, moreover, a very solemn sovereign indeed. On his head he wore a crown of sea-gull's feathers, and on his neck a collar of gold; he was dressed, like the greater num-

ber of his subjects, in furs, and his body was painted in various colours.

He received Moël graciously, inquired about his companions, and, when he heard that fishing was the chief purpose of their sea-going, he manifested the utmost satisfaction. The king, it appeared, had a particular liking for fresh fish, and his fisher people were so little skilled in their craft that they supplied him only with stale fish, taken far from the coast, or with salt fish, which he did not appreciate. There was on the island, indeed, a plentiful lack both of implements and intelligence.

Moël promised that the royal table should be abundantly supplied with the king's favourite food, and, entering at once upon his official duties, he took his fleet, without delay, to the deep sea. Good luck attended him; just off the coast of the island, he let down his nets into waters that swarmed with fish, as though they formed one vast fish-pond, and the finest specimens of the ocean folk might almost have been taken with the hand. The Freislanders could not understand how it was that the native fishers had failed to satisfy the king by their "takes," especially as the islanders had well-built boats, so nearly approaching those of the North in form, as to render it almost certain that the island fishing-fleet had been created by the Scandinavians, in former times.

Moël and his companions dwelt, for not less than five years, on the coast of this island. They were well treated in every way, receiving constant attention and innumerable gifts. The islanders attached to the flotilla compared the island with their own country in point of size, but recognized its superior fertility, for the natives cultivated wheat and brewed beer.

Moël ascertained, in his excursions into the interior, that Estotiland was watered by four rivers. The country was covered with forests, towns, and isolated country houses. Altogether, the island was a most civilized and agreeable place of abode, and the Freislanders would not have thought of leaving it had not the king conceived the unfortunate idea of organizing an exploring expedition to the south, where, he had been told, countries far more rich than his own existed.

On that occasion Moël was given the command of the fleet, which was composed of twelve ships, well built and well "found" in every respect. The priest, who had been the first to bid him welcome to that strange land, was to accompany him, as his assistant. The king, although he never would consent to be converted to the Christian faith, held that religion in high esteem and also its minister, who had been cast upon his coast as the last waif of a vanished mission, and had been made warmly welcome in that desolate condition.

The presence of the holy man with his fleet had been considered necessary by the sovereign of Estotiland, to secure its good luck and protect it against any dangers that it might have to encounter. Under such patronage and the skilled direction of the Freislander fisherman, so suddenly promoted to admiral's rank, the expedition might surely boast of the happiest auspices ; but the event did not justify the presage. After a few days of plain and peaceful sailing, a terrific tempest, such as the Gulf Stream frequently causes in American waters, suddenly arose and raged furiously among the disabled vessels. The greater number were swallowed up by the waves, and the rest were flung upon the coast. Of all the crews of that fine fleet there remained only a few sailors, the missionary, and Moël.

For a little while they might account themselves saved ; but, although the elements had spared them, it was only to fall into the hands of the natives. The latter were a tribe of cannibals, who regarded the white men as festival fare of a superior kind. They began by eating the Newfoundland men, who were rather weather-beaten, reserving the Freislanders and the servant of the Lord as the titbits of the treat. The latter was sacrificed like the others, but not till he had had the supreme joy and sovereign consolation of converting Moël and his fellow countrymen.

"HE TAUGHT THE KING OF THE CANNIBALS THE ART OF NET – MAKING."

Now the admiral's turn was come. He had been reserved for the final banquet, with five of his men, and again, this time, it was fishing lore that decided his fate. He taught the king of the cannibals the art of net-making, and how to use the nets so as to procure fish in abundance. That monarch, like his royal cousin of Estotiland, was particularly fond of freshly caught fish, with their strong odour of the sea depths, and he was so grateful to the shipwrecked mariners for their skill that he spared their lives, and bestowed many favours upon them. Then, after they had instructed the pupils assigned to them, and the king could do without them, he sold them to a neighbouring chief, who paid a smart price for them on account of their renown.

Their new master was no less satisfied with their services than the King of Estotiland, and, being quite as practical as that potentate, he also laid their scientific knowledge and practical experience under contribution, and afterwards sold them, at a profit, to a third chief, who, in his turn, and on similar terms, passed them on to another, and so on, all along the coast.

In the space of thirteen years, the Freislanders changed owners twenty-five times, visiting many widely varying regions and different tribes, and thus a great deal that was surprising and unexpected came under their observation.

"We saw," said Moël, "an immense country, *as it were a new world*, with a savage population, who go naked for want of knowing how to save the skins of the animals they kill, have no metals, live by hunting and fishing, use bows and arrows, and wooden lances for weapons, fight with the utmost ferocity, and always eat their prisoners."

The white men were forced to be present at these horrible feasts, but never consented to take part in them, an abstention wholly unintelligible to the natives, who esteemed human flesh more highly as savoury food than the most delicate fish.

Every change of owners made the unfortunate Freislanders dread a final catastrophe; nevertheless, from stage to stage they progressed, until at length they reached, without hindrance, a kingdom "where there was more civility, because of the mildness of the climate." This did not, however, interfere at all with the eating of men, after due performance of religious ceremonies.

These human sacrifices were perpetrated in huge buildings where idols of the strangest form, and invariably very ugly, presided, after a grotesque fashion. Large and populous towns were in the vicinity of these edifices, and the intervening forests and plains teemed with luxurious vegetation. Wealth and prosperity were in the very air, the earth brought forth its fruits in the richest abundance,

and gold itself seemed sufficiently plentiful. The chiefs wore gold ornaments on occasions of great solemnity, and the people asserted that it was found in large quantities, farther down, on the southwest.

This information fired the ambition and sharpened the greed of the men of the North. Does not the precious metal exert its fascination over us all, without distinction? They resolved to quit the land of vast forests and great temples, which were shrines for idols, — the description of it corresponds exactly with that of Florida, — for the promised land of gold, which must have been Mexico, judging by the direction indicated. Moël refused to take part in this expedition.

He exhorted his companions, explained to them the dangers they were about to incur, and reminded them of those they had miraculously escaped. His efforts were vain, and then, as he did not claim the right to impose his will upon them, he left them free to act, and set out alone to retrace the way by which they had come.

As he knew the speech of the regions he had to traverse, and had left a friendly remembrance of himself at every place of his former sojourn, he was unmolested on his solitary journey.

Some there were who strove to keep him, by showing him the advantages he might gain by remaining, even among the most hardened cannibals,

but no persuasion could induce him to dwell among his friends, the savages. The tragic fate of the priest, whom the King of Estotiland had given to him to be his companion, was always before his eyes, and the precepts and exhortations of that good man had inspired him with the desire to end his days in prayer and contrition.

Accordingly, Moël rejected the worldly advantages that were offered to him spontaneously and plentifully, and left the "fortunate coasts" for Estotiland, where he rendered an account of his mission. There, also, the inhabitants did everything in their power to induce him to remain. He refused.

Nevertheless, he did resume his former occupation for a time, wishing to make himself agreeable to the king. But one day when he was out at sea, on drawing in his nets, a sudden wind from the south-west filled his sail, and drove him in the direction of his own country. He could not resist the temptation, and, letting himself be carried by the will of the wind, and the course of the waves, he left it to Providence to take him home in safety.

Providence guided and kept him in the right course; he easily gained, not indeed Iceland or the Faroe Islands, but Greenland, where he, with many others, received ordination from the Bishop of Gardar. Shortly after, he was sent by the latter, in company with several other clerks in Holy

Orders, to seek a fitting place for the establishment of a monastery in the far North.

In obedience to the wishes of his ecclesiastical chief, Moël sailed along the eastern side of the gloomy country of frost. He did not allow himself to be stopped by either packs or fields of ice, until one day he came into a bay of lukewarm water, and made up his mind that he need not go any further.

It was there that Sinclair found him, some twenty years after his adventures had come to an end, but still so strongly impressed by the memory of them that he did not spare his visitor a single particular in his narration.

CHAPTER XXI.

BEYOND THE SEAS.

Wintering at Saint Thomas. — Death of Moël and also of Nicolo Zeno. — An expedition to the west. — Sinclair finds Markland anew. —Traces of a Christian mission. —He afterwards discovers a more fertile country, but his crew insist upon returning to their own. — They depart, while Sinclair goes deeper into the land. — He is never heard of again.

The Norman knight believed himself to be the sport of a dream, while he listened to the narrative of the prior of the monastery of Saint Thomas. Those men who ate men's flesh, those gigantic trees, those countries where the sun poured its rays upon the earth without cessation, seemed to him a mirage created by the imagination of the speaker, and yet the sacred calling of the venerable priest and the expression of simple truth that was visible in his face forbade any doubt of the scrupulous fidelity of his statements.

When he had come to an end of his "strange eventful history," his hearer yielded to the influence of a vague, indefinite fancy which he had cherished, half acknowledged, for a long time, and which now took shape all of a sudden, and had to be contem-

plated as definite, not dreamlike. He remained like one in an ecstasy, and kneeling at the feet of the one-time fisherman, the Norman noble, the count, the viceroy, begged him to invoke God on his behalf, that success might be bidden by Heaven to attend upon the enterprise that had sprung spontaneously from his fancy, but now lay before him as a picture, more attractive, bright, and smiling than any other scheme of his had ever been, and so full of prospective discovery, exploration, and conquest, that he questioned whether his whole life would suffice for the execution of his design.

Moël gave him encouragement, promising to conduct him to the most promising lands; for, so much was he impressed by the change in his guest's purpose, and the extraordinary effect of his own narrative, that he immediately resolved to accompany Sinclair. Not only was this a pleasure to him, it was an obligation. With his desire to revisit the regions in which he had dwelt under such strange circumstances, a sense of duty was combined; for was he not called upon to catechize and convert the people who dwelt in them, from the worship of barbarous idols? Pressed by conscience and inclination, the prior made all haste to get away. For some years past, he had remarked that the passage by which the bay might be entered during a brief season was narrowing, and especially that it was

becoming uncertain of occurrence, hardly more than a fortunate accident, of which advantage had to be taken with the utmost celerity, so that he could not feel entirely confident of effecting the departure of Sinclair's ships.

The result justified the prior's misgivings. While the monks in the monastery and the sailors on board the ships were making active preparations for departure, the barks keeping the lookout at the entrance of the gulf reported less and less space between the floating ice-fields day by day. Presently the latter succeeded each other with hardly any interval, and when all was ready for setting sail, it was too late; the wall of ice had become solid, and there was nothing for the fleet but patient waiting, imprisoned in an inland sea, for the return of the fine season, — a long lookout.

This was a serious disappointment to all concerned; it meant the loss of nearly a year. The time passed, in sullen idleness for the crews, for the chiefs in perfecting their plans and coming to resolutions carefully formed and worked out with Moël. This collaboration was of incalculable utility to them; for, before the passage was open, the prior of Saint Thomas was suddenly taken ill, and died a few days later, without having regained consciousness.

His death was followed by a second disaster. Nicolo Zeno was attacked by consumption, a disease

"THE WALL OF ICE HAD BECOME SOLID."

which made havoc among the Venetians. When, at length, the way was clear for the ship to quit this inhospitable country the admiral was obliged to bid farewell to his companions. With bitterness of spirit he watched the fleet which he had commanded disappear in the direction of summer lands of sunshine over sea, and then himself set sail with a shipload of fever-stricken and dying men for the Faroe Isles. He reached his destination in safety, but died shortly afterwards.

Antonio Zeno had taken his brother's place at the head of the squadron, and, notwithstanding the evil omens that had attended the start of the expedition, the Norman-Venetian fleet pursued its course towards the unknown. For a long time the bold explorers sailed between sea and sky, with nothing to meet their gaze but the encircling waves. Like their forerunners, they had to encounter dense fogs and terrible storms; also, — a no less disheartening experience, — to endure those wearisome calms which depress the most buoyant spirits. At length, after a seemingly interminable spell of motionlessness, the wind, which had apparently departed from the scheme of creation for good, rose, blowing from the east, and presently the long blue line of "land" shewed on the horizon.

The sight of this land confirmed the statement of Moël, which Sinclair had begun to doubt; but its

aspect on a near view did not correspond with the old fisherman's description. No men dressed in furs, like those of Estotiland, no naked savages, inimical to all comers, like those of the more southern regions, were to be seen. The clothing of the natives, who seemed quite inoffensive, consisted chiefly of feathers, and, to the especial surprise of Sinclair and his companions, every man had a Latin cross, of very distinct form, tattooed in red upon one shoulder.

They had no priests, they worshipped clumsy idols, — they were not then Christians, — and yet they had a tradition of the Catholic faith! An old seaman, who had sailed in transatlantic seas in the time of the last voyages of the Northmen, understood enough of their language to be able to translate their customary prayer. It was this :

"My God! give us life and health, for ourselves and our families, *food for the day*, victory over our enemies." Save for the last clause, which belongs to a different order of invocation, there is, in this prayer, a distinct reflection of the *Pater*, and the fact struck the newcomers forcibly. Their astonishment was increased on learning that at a remote period white men, whom some of the old natives still remembered, had appeared among this people. These white men carried a red cross, which they held out to the veneration of the natives, and some fragments of their language, still remaining in popular tradition,

were recognized by Sinclair and Zeno as Latin, though somewhat corrupt. From all this it was manifest that a Christian mission had existed at one time in the country.

The white men had disappeared, no doubt in some temporary disturbance, but their cross remained, and such was the prestige attached to it by this mild and dreamy race that it seemed to be the palladium and sacred emblem of all their acts and manifestations. At their ceremonies, civil, warlike, and even pagan, the chiefs hoisted the red cross like a standard. As for the people, it was, as before said, incrusted in their flesh ; and — a characteristic sign which rendered its religious origin indisputable — the burial-places of the dead were planted thick with crosses, just like our Christian cemeteries.

In the seventeenth century, Father Christian Le Clerq, a Franciscan missionary, found all that has just been described still existing in Gaspasia, afterwards Acadia and Nova Scotia, successively. It is, therefore, beyond doubt that Sinclair, like the Norsemen of old, his compatriots and forerunners, had been carried direct to this point of Canada which was connected with the regions of the North by a natural current.

Like Leif, Thorwald, and Thorfinn, he regarded the wooded coast merely as a provisional place to touch at. The country was poor, ruined by war, and

depopulated by successive migrations. This was not Moël's promised land. The fleet anchored, indeed, but set sail again after a brief stay. Fatality attended upon it: beaten by contrary winds, and caught in a current which swept it out of its course this time, it was driven on the wild coast of an inhospitable island.

Sinclair and Antonio Zeno, who wrote the history of this expedition, were for taking refuge in the island. "A people, so to speak, innumerable and disposed to defend themselves, forbade them to land." They were not men to be deterred, either one or the other; but in order to keep their forces intact for more important employment, they postponed the conquest of the island, which they named Icaria.

The storm subsided, the face of the heavens was cleared, and after a few days they lifted the anchor and sailed away to the west on a radiant morning well calculated to embitter their regrets. Soon, however, the sea rose again, and the wind, veering to the southwest, remained astern of them for four days. Then, at last, they sighted land.

Some of the men, who were sent on shore as scouts, returned with good news. The anchorage was excellent, the country fertile, and the natives had shewn neither fear nor hostility at sight of the strangers. Sinclair then landed with his men at arms, a small force which he divided into two parts, — one to remain at his own disposal, and the other, one

hundred strong, to be employed in exploration under the guidance of Antonio Zeno.

A smoking mountain, visible afar off, especially aroused the curiosity of the Norman chief. Zeno, who had seen Vesuvius and Etna, had told him wonders of those mountains and the surrounding countries. Sinclair regarded the presence of the majestic cone, with its floating blue plume, as a good omen, and his easily excited imagination turned the plains and the woods, which lay before him, into fertile land, such as Zeno had described.

On Zeno's return, at the expiration of a week, his report cooled Sinclair's enthusiasm to some extent. He learned, however, with interest, that the smoke of what he took to be a Vesuvius came in reality from a vast underground passage, and a spring which cast up a sort of tar. He was also informed that a great river, abounding in fish, flowed at no great distance, and was lost in the sea close to a place on the beach, covered with eggs, and frequented by innumerable birds. The fertility of the soil in the interior of the island was proved by the luxuriant vegetation, and its inhabitants, "numerous, half-savage, and of short stature," but very peaceable, showed the utmost desire to live in peace with everybody. In short, the island was, if not a terrestrial paradise, a very suitable and acceptable place for the foundation of a new settlement to serve as a base for future explorations.

Sinclair then decided that he would remain for the present on the island, which had the special merit in his eyes of possessing an excellent harbour for his fleet at the present time, and available at any other period for shelter. He imparted his intentions to his companions in arms ; but, to his great surprise, the latter refused to share his fortune any longer, and demanded to be allowed to return to their own country. They were tired of the tedium and the uncertainty of the voyage, and, after the experience of the Bay of Saint Thomas, they dreaded the idea of passing the winter in an unknown country.

Sinclair was helpless in the face of the general desire plainly expressed, but his plans were not changed by this serious defection. After a last fruitless attempt to reverse the decision of the men, he handed over his fleet to Zeno, whom he embraced several times, and, in his capacity as chief of the expedition, gave him a formal order to depart. Then, accompanied by a few faithful friends, athirst, like himself, for adventure and discovery, he struck into the interior of the country, without even a parting glance at his ships as they glided away into the morning mists of the ocean.

Zeno, who was profoundly troubled by this issue, which did not correspond in any way with the programme his brother had drawn up to induce him to come to the North, wrote afterwards :

"I departed then, but much against my will. I sailed eastward for twenty days. Turning afterwards to the southeast, I reached the island of Neome, where I became aware that I had passed Iceland, in twenty days. I took in provisions at this island, which was subject to Sinclair, and sailing again with a fair wind, in three days I made Freisland, where the people, who, by reason of his long absence, believed they had lost their prince, manifested the greatest joy on learning that he was living."

That day of gladness was to have no morrow. Henry Sinclair was never again heard of, either in the Faroe Isles or elsewhere.

Part IV.

THE DIEPPE MEN IN BRAZIL FOUR YEARS BEFORE THE EXPEDITION OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

CHAPTER XXII.

JEAN COUSIN.

The Merchant Marine. — Chasing the English. — Admiral Jean Cousin, pupil of Pierre Descaliers, inventor of Hydrography. — He lands in America in 1488 (four years in advance of Christopher Columbus. — His triumphal return to Dieppe. — The official proof of the Admiral's discovery is not forthcoming.

A CENTURY had elapsed. The Brothers Sutlers (*Frères vivandiers*) and other skimmers of the seas had been so tracked and hunted down that at last they retreated to their fjords, whence they came forth, at certain seasons only, to pursue the infinitely more honest and at least equally lucrative avocation of fishing.

In Normandy a similar salutary change had taken place in matters maritime. The navy was now devoted to commerce, and gallantly winning its place

in the epic of the great expeditions that precede and prepare the way for the immortal discoveries of the close of the fifteenth century. Hitherto, the merchant marine had been in the hands of foreigners. From all the ports of Portugal, Spain, and the Italian republics, fleets sailed in quest of unexplored continents. In the earliest times, the Normans, who furnished almost the whole of the French naval force for all purposes, had taken part in that movement; then came the English invasion, and all things colonial ceased to interest them. Even in the fourteenth century, when there was so much naval adventure, the entire fleet of our kings consisted of a few galleys and some caracks,* which were purchased in Italy, and manned by foreigners. Therefore, the part we played upon the sea was not creditable until our brave seamen of the Manche entered the lists.

In 1337, at the first naval battle between the English and the French, the fleet commanded by the Genoese admiral, Barbavera, acting for Philip the Bold, ran away at the first shot; but Captain Behuchet, of Dieppe, at the head of fifty Norman barks, held on, and not only resisted the enemy sturdily, but captured five ships of the line, which he brought back to Pollet in triumph

This brilliant feat of arms secured the condemnation of the heterogeneous merchant marine.

* A large Portuguese ship of the period.

Thenceforth, the Kings of France reckoned upon their own faithful subjects of the West only, and the new system was soon justified by success. At the battle of the Sluis (L'Écluze), 24 June, 1340, the Norsemen distinguished themselves; in 1370, they furnished transport for the troops of Charles V., who burned Portsmouth to ashes; the following year, Ambroise of Dieppe, nicknamed "Bouche-Négre," beat and dispersed the English fleet before La Rochelle; and afterwards, the English continuing their piracies, notwithstanding that the war was ended, the whole coast from Calais to Granville combined for the extermination of their ships on its own account. Our volunteer seamen won great renown. They brought every English ship they could discover into our ports, and proud Albion, humiliated, baffled, and beaten, was obliged to sue abjectly to her conquerors for the restoration of her vessels. This was granted on England's undertaking never again to molest maritime commerce in time of peace.

Then, having cleared the sea of their worst enemies, privateers from Rouen, Dieppe, Honfleur, and Harfleur resumed the ocean-way to Guinea, where they had formerly preceded the Portuguese. In November, 1364, certain merchants of Dieppe fitted out two vessels which sailed for the Canaries, and touched the African coast on Christmas day. The

bold seamen on board these two ships anchored before Rio Fresca, in a bay which they named "The Bay of France." There the Dieppe men exchanged their glassware for gold, ivory, and pepper; then resumed their course and arrived at Bonlombel, or Sierra Leone. From thence they proceeded to the mouth of a small river near Rio Sextos. There they found a village, and having named it Little Dieppe, they completed their lading, and returned to their own port.

This bold stroke roused the emulation of the whole marine of our western coasts. In 1365, the merchants of Rouen formed a partnership with those of Dieppe, and fitted out four ships, two to trade to Cape Verde, the others to push on farther. And, in fact, the latter put in at a place which they called Little Paris. They followed the Grain Coast, traded on the Ivory Coast, and got as far as the Gold Coast.

During the reign of Charles V. expeditions on the west coast of Africa were frequently sent out, and a number of "lodges," or stores, were opened in the midst of the native tribes. In 1380, 1382, and 1383, important and successful voyages of exploration took place. The first of these, that of *Notre Dame de Bon Voyage*, which was fitted out at Rouen, figures in maritime traditions on account of the rich cargo which the good ship brought home from coasts on which no European had previously set foot. And,

at the same time, Jehan de Prenhaut, a navigator belonging to Dieppe, received the title of King of Guinea as a reward for his discoveries.

But time went on; century succeeded century, and the Gold Coast no longer sufficed to mercantile or maritime ambition. The Norman merchants had heard mention of marvellous countries farther south, and they longed to visit these; above all to surpass "the others;" for them, virgin lands had an unparalleled attraction.

It was resolved that a great expedition should be fitted out. The ship owners made inquiry and compared the merits of the various aspirants to the command. The choice of the Dieppe merchants, acting as experts, fell upon Jean Cousin, the youngest of them all. He was barely twenty-five, but he had already visited the coast of Africa, and had greatly distinguished himself in the war of the partisans; also, and this was more important than all, he was held in high esteem by the celebrated cosmographist, Descaliers, then regarded as the umpire of the seas.

Pierre Descaliers, or des Cheliers, was a priest of the district of Arques, who from his early youth had taken strongly to mathematics and astronomy. He applied himself afterwards to the study of maritime science with such effect that his fame soon spread all over the world. Never had he sailed upon it, yet this humble priest knew the sea better than the most

experienced seamen; he had wrested its secrets from it, for he was the sole inventor of hydrography, the science that teaches the pilot how to set his helm on the high sea, and to find his way at whatsoever distance from land he may be.

Within a short time, navigators resorted to him from everywhere, and his presbytery became the high school of captains, old and young, veterans and beginners, who came to this man of genius to learn the art of guiding their vessels and guarding against shipwreck.

Cousin was the favourite disciple of Descaliers; each time that he landed at Dieppe he invariably set out for Arques, where he remained until he had to start on a fresh cruise. And there he worked, under the instruction of the master, with indefatigable ardour. It appears that he specially excelled in the use of the globes. He was also skilled in the construction of them, and Asseline records, admiringly, that on one occasion he drew a sphere with a globe in the centre which represented all parts of the world. This was considered a marvellous performance, and, had it been his sole achievement, Descaliers would have specially recommended him to the ship owners for selection on the strength of it. Jean Cousin thus became admiral of the finest vessel of the Dieppe fleet, at twenty-five years old, and his mandate was "to discover new countries." All deeds of daring

were permitted to him, he was urged to all that was adventurous, and besought to leave no attempt unmade.

He began by selecting a crew worthy of the adventures he was about to seek. The choice was easy at Dieppe; there was no lack of good sailors in the country of Behuchet and Bouche-Négre, any more than of good officers. Cousin was well known for his valour and enterprise. Nothing more was needed to secure all the active and courageous seamen in the place for his service. The old captains and pilots who had commanded at sea held it an honour to enlist under the young admiral. Thus Cousin had no trouble in recruiting his staff among the very best of the Dieppe seamen. There was a solitary exception, one Pinçon, who claimed Spanish origin, notwithstanding the dissent of his name,* and who was forced upon Cousin as second officer by the fiat of a ship owner.

There was nothing surprising in this. Spanish and Portuguese seamen had continuous intercourse at that time with the Norsemen, who, on their part, assiduously frequented Spain and Portugal. They all found this compromise advantageous, no doubt in

* The author spells the name of Cousin's lieutenant as above, in the narrative which follows, but adopts the form with which we are familiar in histories of the period of Columbus — Pinzon — in the ensuing chapter. Pinzon is distinctly Spanish.

virtue of the old adage which teaches us that a man is a better prophet in a neighbour's country than in his own. In France, foreign seamen, with the exception of the English, who for good reasons were not in the odour of sanctity, enjoyed great immunities and precious privileges. In our ports they lived under the widest possible guarantees of protection and commercial liberty. In no other country could they form a settlement or reside in any fixed place; almost everywhere else they had to encounter troublesome, jealous, or vexatious systems of administration, while the great basins of our harbours were opened wide to them, lodgings, houses, and magazines were placed at their disposal, and the privilege of absolute security was theirs. They could buy, sell, and bargain in our coast towns on far easier terms than the inhabitants of those ports; and there they found judges who were their own countrymen, and of their own selection, and who tried them according to their own national laws and customs. Lastly, they were subject only to the kindly authority of a royal magistrate, who was supplied with a maritime code of universal application, which summed up special laws called the laws of Oléron.

Jean Cousin — or *Jehan*, in the language of his time, when, however, *Jehan* was most probably pronounced as *Jean* is now — had for his second officer, his lieutenant, his *alter ego*, one Vincent Pinçon.

This personage, who was older than the admiral, was a typical "hidalgo." He wore curled mustachios, and a long chin-tuft; he was thin and bony; he was dressed in scarlet, with slashed doublet and ruff, and a corslet of steel inlaid with gold, which he never laid aside under any circumstances. His sword, with a very big basket hilt, came from the leading armourers in Toledo; and a preposterous plume waved high and wide above his cap. Thus attired, he strutted about like a king in a pantomime, and his harsh, haughty, hard manner of speech was all of a piece with his appearance and his bearing. Cousin, a simple and "correct" person, did not admire him very much, but, as we have already seen, he was obliged to accept him as his lieutenant.

The departure of the flag-ship took place at the beginning of 1488, with the usual ceremonial. When the ship, having emerged from the quays, reached the open sea, the batteries of Pollet and the Château saluted her and fired several farewell salvos, and when it had vanished from the horizon, everybody talked of the straight line it kept, whereas the other ships generally inclined either to the right or to the left, especially when setting off for great adventures, — before they were out of sight. But Cousin's ship went forward to the unknown, like an arrow sped from the bow of a skilled archer.

Now, the unknown was not his goal. He was

under orders to *run out the African coasts coming after those of Adra and the Congo*, for which his cargo was destined. And it was his intention to proceed to the coasts prescribed; but he meant to attain them by a different route from the one hitherto adopted.

Fortified by the advice and instruction of the Abbé Descaliers, and availing himself of the winds out at sea, he had no sooner cleared the channel (La Manche) than he steered for mid-ocean instead of hugging the coast as his predecessors had done. He intended to sail west and southwest until he should meet with a current which would carry him, according to the new theory, to a point of Southern Africa. Afterwards, he would have time to "*run out*" the coasts which were the goal of the expedition.

From the first, Lieutenant Pinçon let it be seen that the Admiral's abnormal proceeding had not his approval. He ventured certain observations; the admiral enjoined silence upon him, requesting him not to meddle with matters that did not concern him. The Azores were passed; this had not hitherto been done; it was indeed known that a current existed which carried unlucky ships caught in it with headlong rapidity to the southwest.

Now, far from avoiding this submarine river, which was popularly believed to fall into some infernal whirlpool, Jehan Cousin had sought it, and having

found it he abandoned himself to its course, to the great astonishment of his crew, and the unbounded wrath of the Spanish lieutenant. The latter, an older sailor than his chief, had contrived, in spite of his disagreeable aspect, to acquire some influence over the good seamen from Normandy, although those honest and simple-hearted fellows were devoted to their compatriot admiral, under whom several of them had already served. Nevertheless, this voyage, which was opposed to all the ideas and traditions of the service, frightened them. Whither were they going? What would become of them? Waves succeeded to waves, tempest to tempests, and only the solitary ocean stretched before them, with no land anywhere, according to the received belief, ever, by possibility, to bless their sight.

Pinçon took advantage of the men's mood. He cared not at all for chimerical adventures, and, indeed, his chief had not thought proper to talk to him about them. Now, when he indicated his purpose, the Spaniard endeavoured to get up a mutiny among the admiral's crew.

"Your chief," said he, "is nothing but a foolhardy youngster, whose notion is either to perish or to distinguish himself by the discovery of unknown countries. It is deplorable that the lives of so many brave seamen should be entrusted to such a featherhead. They will certainly be sacrificed to his folly,

for, at any moment our ship may be dashed to pieces on some rock or other rising up in the raging sea."

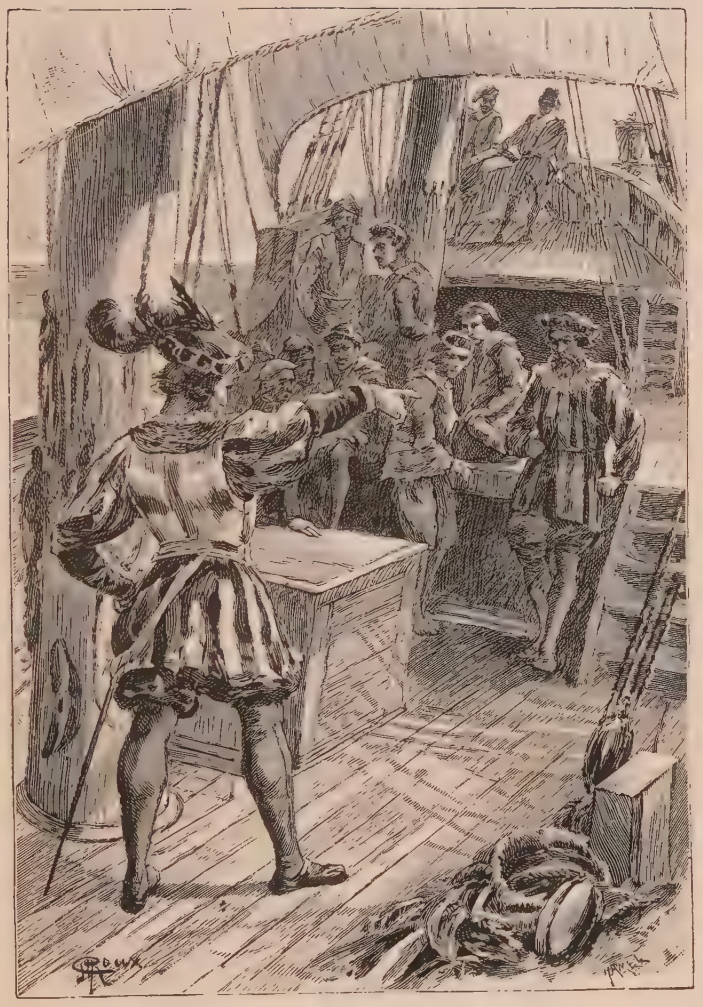
The sailors looked serious on hearing these words, and shook their heads. They were going to their death, for certain. The days went on, and the state of things remained unchanged.

"Ah!" exclaimed Pinçon, to whom the men listened more and more attentively. "The god of the waters has forsaken us. We want to attempt the impossible, and the impossible is displeasing to the Creator, who has placed man in the lands which He has granted to him, and in the seas that surround them."

"That is true," replied the seamen, returning to their inbred sentiments of conservatism and piety, notwithstanding their professional curiosity.

"Believe me," resumed Pinçon, "great dangers are in store for us, and we are incurring the anger of Heaven. It will be let loose upon our leader, and we shall have to suffer from it. We are going straight to shipwreck, to a rock which will smash us like glass, or to a whirlwind which will swallow us up before we have time to commend our souls to Our Lady."

At this moment Cousin came on deck, and instantly perceived the change in the men's mood. His crew avoided his glances, and looked sullen. He walked straight over to his lieutenant.



JEAN COUSIN UPBRAIDING HIS LIEUTENANT.

"You," said he, "are on my ship, a foreigner. Your duty is to obey me implicitly, and you have no right to speak to my people. They know who I am, and have nothing to do with your talk. They are honest sailors who have made their proofs of valour, who dread no dangers, who have beaten the English one against ten. The sea cannot take them by surprise, they know its whims, and love it, notwithstanding its rebellion. You waste your time in trying to turn them from their duty and their pledge." Then he addressed the crew. "Say I not well, my friends, that you are ready to follow me whither I shall lead you, and that you will not forsake me, your compatriot, your admiral, your old companion in fight and fame?"

"No, no," cried the crowd of seamen, with one voice.

"I am master here, by God's award, and by your oath. My lieutenant is only a ship's hand, to whom you owe no obedience, except when he transmits my orders. The foreigner has no rule among us."

All who heard his words cheered them. From that moment, the admiral was a god to his crew, and never again was a murmur heard upon his ship.

A few days later, the cry, dear to the mariner, the magic cry, "Land!" was heard from the mainmast.

Cousin thought his ears had deceived him, but, on going up to the lookout's post to see for himself, he

yielded to the evidence of his eyes. It was, indeed, land that lay before him; land, represented by a blue line which seamen never mistake; land to the west, which none at that period had suspected save those now known to us, which none had seen even in a dream.

This incident overthrew all the plans of Jehan Cousin. He felt that he was turning his back on the country he was commissioned to discover, and, also, that his inverse current, for which Descaliers had prepared him, had vanished, — at least, so he believed.

The ship, however, was approaching the coast, and now trees were to be seen on the height of the cliffs, and also on the water's edge. Canoes, paddled by strange-looking, yellow-skinned men who shewed no sign of fear, came swiftly towards the floating monster, and surrounded it; then the men, recognizing other men, climbed on board, laden with delicious fruits, such as the Europeans had never seen, but which were eagerly devoured. Then Jehan Cousin had the kettle-drums beaten and the trumpets blown, and, in his admiral's uniform, followed by his soldiers and sailors, he stepped ashore in great state amid the crew's shout of "Moël!" and the salute of musketry.

His first proceeding was to nail his sash, which was embroidered with the lilies of France, to the

nearest tree. Thus he took possession of the new country in the name of his august sovereign, the most Christian King, Charles the Eighth. He then inquired into the resources of the country, which were immense. The soil produced precious woods, unknown essences, perfumed gums, animals bearing fur worthy of comparison with the finest ermine and minever; and the necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and anklets worn by the natives proved that gold was to be found there in profusion.

It was very hard on the discoverer of these wonders to abstain from cramming his ship with them, and returning to Dieppé with such a cargo as never had been seen within ship owners' memory. But, at that time, owners' orders were formal and inviolable. Jehan Cousin had it in commission to make discoveries in Africa, and not beyond the seas. Therefore, he did not linger over the exploration of the transatlantic lands; he could not, however, resist the temptation to ascend a river as wide as an arm of the sea, which the natives called the *Maragnon*, for some distance.

It was in Brazil that Jehan Cousin had landed. The existence of the current which leads from the Azores straight to the mouth of the Amazon River, which is no other than the Maragnon, is now well known. Its waters flow a zigzag course, from the coast of Norway, and "run out" the Dolphin

plateau, which bifurcates near the American coast with the junction plateau leading to the Challenger plateau; the latter leads by a hook to the south coast of Africa, from the country of the Namaquas to the point of the black continent. The Abbé Descaliers had correctly divined the existence of this mysterious river in mid-seas; he could not have guessed that a continent, coming suddenly in its way, would cause it to incline towards the African coast.

This was a ray of light for Cousin, and thenceforth his mind was fixed upon finding the branch of the maritime river that would lead him to his destination. He promptly quitted the wonderful Eden into which chance had led him, not, however, without having taken its bearings, exactly, with a view to returning, or at least indicating the route to his owners. Then he reascended his current, his helm to the east, and, a few days after he had cleared the Maragnon, his ship, of its own accord, inclined to the southeast, and he was carried towards the African continent.

The truth is that he went beyond it. The admiral instinctively perceived that he was at the point of Africa, and, in order to be well assured of this, he pushed on to the east and turned the coast so far as the tropic of Capricorn, after having named the promontory which he had reached, "*Le Cap des*

Aigulles." Being henceforth certain that he had found the way to the East Indies, that problem on which all mariners and all ship owners were intent, he retraced his course, and quickly proceeded to "run out" the coasts, according to his instructions, towards the Congo and the coast of Adra, there to barter his merchandise.

On the voyage, he met with a mishap of an unforeseen kind. To explain this incident, we must go back and take up the Spaniard, Vincent Pinçon, where we left him.

After the scene of the half-mutiny in which he played so mean a part, the lieutenant, having been effectually put down by Cousin, had been obliged to assume a fair face; nevertheless, he chafed against his bit and longed for vengeance, or, at least, for an opportunity to do some injury to the admiral.

On the coasts of Brazil the thing was impossible, for he could not contend against the enthusiasm of the crew, who actually witnessed the success of their leader. Some of them, indeed, wanted to lay violent hands on the lieutenant. What! he had doubted the success of the enterprise; he, accepted, if not chosen, by the great Dieppe man to represent him, to assist him; he, his right arm, his mouthpiece, honoured with his confidence, his esteem, in possession of his most secret thoughts! Cousin had to save Pinçon, in his turn, from a revolt which

might have had the worst consequences for him. Thanks to his firmness and to his authority over his crew, the men forgave Pinçon ; but the admiral's kindness, and the position in which it placed him in the eyes of the seamen, merely embittered his resentment.

The desired opportunity presented itself, at length, on the coast of Africa, on the return from the memorable voyage to the Maragnon. Cousin had sent his lieutenant ashore to barter merchandise with the inhabitants of the coast of Angola, and the latter had hastened to bring their products down to the beach. There they had placed them in rows, and were waiting, with true African patience, for a deal in glass beads. What was their horror and amazement when Pinçon ordered his men to carry the whole of the ivory and palm-oil on board without a word about exchange or payment! They endeavoured to oppose this audacious robbery ; the Spaniard made answer by firing his blunderbuss at them. Instantly the African band rushed upon the sailors, who, being taken by surprise, used their arms. Then came a sanguinary struggle, in which the natives were, of course, worsted, and soon lay dead on the ground. This was what Pinçon wanted. He contemplated his devilish handiwork with a smile, and contentedly walked away towards the flag-ship, disdainfully leaving the merchandise, which

was the first cause of the encounter, on the beach.

Cousin, who could not understand what the firing meant, but heard the noise and saw the smoke, had jumped into a boat with several of his crew; when the Spaniard, coming close, informed him that his men had been attacked and were forced to defend themselves.

Then an old Dieppe man spoke up.

"Admiral, when this man tells you that we were attacked unawares, he is in the right, but what he takes care to hide from you is that it was he who provoked the fight by firing first on an inoffensive people. Is this true, my brothers?"

"Yes, yes!" answered the sailors, in chorus.

Cousin was pale with anger.

"So, señor," said he, "I cannot make a step without finding you in my path. It is due to these brave fellows only that we have discovered the country of the Maragnon, and now you close a rich region, which gave itself to us with all its heart, and promised us an unparalleled colony, against us. My friends, I am responsible for my officers to my owners; I am master of this man; what ought I to do?"

"Death! Death!" cried the crew.

"Hang him from a yard-arm," said one.

"Throw him overboard, with a cannon-ball at his feet," recommended another.

"Shoot him on the same spot where he fired on the natives," suggested the old Dieppe man who had spoken first.

"That 's it! That 's it!" shouted the whole concourse.

Cousin reflected. When the noise had somewhat subsided, he looked up, and gave the command:

"Parade and land!"

Immediately there ensued the bustle of a review.

The men-at-arms assumed their weapons, and the sailors donned their Sunday caps. Flags fluttered up to the masts, the cannon thundered, and the flotilla of boats rowed, to the sound of music, towards the beach which had witnessed the tragic events caused by the Spaniard's evil deed.

On landing, Cousin formed his men into order of battle, and addressed the Spaniard:

"Señor," said he, "nothing would have been easier for me than to have you shot, as my men demand. To do so, would be to set a good example, and the natives would return to us and trade with us when appeased by that act of justice. But this beach has seen enough bloodshed. I desire, however, that it shall witness your disgrace and your punishment. Pinçon, you are unworthy to serve in the French navy. Give up your sword to me."

The Spaniard made a defiant gesture, and gripped the monumental hilt already mentioned.

"Give up your sword," repeated the admiral.

So clear was his voice, and so calm his bearing, as he said these words, that the Spaniard was conquered. He hung his head, and, with rage at his heart, slowly drew his sword from its scabbard.

He was about to fling it at the admiral's feet, when a glance, like the flash of steel, from his chief made him hang his head again. He then took his sword by the point and held it out to Jehan Cousin.

"That will do," said the latter, coldly, and he struck the good Toledo blade, up to the guard, into the sand of the beach.

Then, turning to the crew, he said:

"My friends, we have nothing more to do here. That man has spoiled all our business. Let us go now and trade at the known place, and afterwards, Dieppe, ho!"

This was done. The return voyage was quick, and at the beginning of 1489 Jehan Cousin reëntered the harbour of Dieppe, having, *four years before Christopher Columbus*, like his forerunners, Leif Erikson, Thorfinn, Thorwald, and Sinclair, touched the continent which has since been called America, and, moreover, having doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and found the way to the Indies, ten years before *Vasco de Gama.*

The narrative of the triumphal reception of the Dieppe men by their fellow countrymen is to be

found in the Chronicle. The whole population, headed by their aldermen, the merchant companies, preceded by the reliquaries of their patron saints, and the guilds of the craftsmen, among whom were the ivory carvers, proceeded to the quay, to welcome him. No sooner had the watch, posted on the Crab Tower, perceived his ship, than the crowd was informed, and raised a mighty cheer, which carried an assurance of the triumph that awaited him to the admiral. During several days the rejoicings lasted, and fête after fête was given in his honour. Then his owners arranged an expedition worthy of him.

These eminent traders had agreed, as we have seen, to keep the discoveries of their captains absolutely secret. It was easy for them to do this, for the Government did not require a declaration of the destinations of their ships, or a report on the places from which they returned. Besides, political affairs entirely absorbed the general attention just then. The Duke of Orleans, at the head of several of the nobles of the kingdom, had risen against Charles the Eighth, who, after he had recalled the duke to his duty, turned his eyes towards the Kingdom of Naples.

The Dieppe merchants had a free hand, and a fair field for their operations, and they availed themselves of the situation. In pursuance of the long-established custom of the Norman sea-captains, Jehan Cousin deposited the narrative of his expedition *in a sealed*

packet, at the Hôtel de Ville, and then he set sail again, at the head of three ships laden with merchandise for barter, and well armed.

We know, from the contracts which they concluded there, that ship owners of Dieppe made a profit out of the discovery of the Maragnon River; but the expeditions to that region were wrapped in as much mystery as those which had the Great Indies for their goal.

The Dieppe ship owners reserved their special favour for the latter. Jehan Cousin had worked out the plan with Descaliers most elaborately and carefully, and, the point of Africa (Cape of Good Hope) having been discovered and doubled by his pupil, the learned priest had no doubt at all of the success of the enterprise if Cousin did but follow the observations he gave him in writing, and in which the true position of the Indies was indicated.

Cousin had found the first lessons of his master too valuable for him to neglect the second. He kept to the middle of the seas between America, which he knew, having landed there, and the "*Cap des Aiguilles*," which he rounded, and thus he came victoriously to the Indies, where he did highly advantageous business in barter.

This is the man to whom Europe, America, and Africa would have erected statues; this is the man whose name would have filled the world, even as the

names of Christopher Columbus and Vasco de Gama have filled it, for he is the incarnation of both of them, and he preceded them in their discoveries; this is the man, a plain merchant-captain, without any mystic enthusiasm, or any ambitious aims, who would assuredly have deserved the purest and most glorious of civic crowns.

Unhappily, although local history, chronicle, and tradition have transmitted to posterity his famous deeds and his great discoveries, we do not possess the absolute proof of them, that proof which was supplied by Jehan Cousin himself, and countersigned by his crew, and by his owners.

That proof was contained in the sealed packet deposited at the Hôtel de Ville of Dieppe, and the packet was destroyed.

How?

The story of its destruction is worth the telling.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BOMBARDMENT OF DIEPPE.

A full and faithful narrative of the bombardment of Dieppe, and the horrors that accompanied it.

On the 16th of July, 1694, France being at war with England and Holland, Captain Beaulieu, who was in the service of a Dieppe ship owner, came into the port, towards evening, with an English frigate of twelve guns, which he had captured, in tow.

Prizes of this sort were frequently made, at that time, and always excited lively satisfaction among the population; on this occasion, however, the enemy's ship proved to be a presage of fate. When the Provost of the Admiralty went to meet Captain Beaulieu, in order to congratulate him in the name of the town, as the custom was, the latter replied, roughly:

"Thanks, sir, but we have something else to do than exchanging compliments."

"What do you mean by that, sir officer?" asked the chief of the Dieppe municipality, in surprise.

"I mean, provost, that this frigate is a scout of the English fleet which is ploughing the Manche. Very soon we shall have the enemy upon us."

At that moment the alarm-bell at Neuville-le-Pollet rang out, and several of the people of the place, easily to be recognized by their red or blue serge jackets, came running across the ford of the Wés street, to announce that the British squadron was in sight.

The governor and the lieutenant of the bailiwick instantly had the alarm given from the great belfry of the town, and information conveyed to the château, where a battery of twelve cannon of various calibre, and four mortars, was mounted on the cliff. Simultaneously, the "citizen gunners," or militia, as we should now call them, hurried along the covered way outside the town, on the seaside, to occupy the batteries at the West Port, and the Gate of the Rue de l' Avoine, while the Bretagne regiment, in garrison at Dieppe, mounted guard on the ramparts, and the bargemen, with a few pieces of artillery, assembled at the end of the pier.

The 17th passed without disturbance, but on the 18th the enemy's fleet approached, and ranged itself in a semicircle at the entrance to the roads, having the Roche d'Ailly to its right, and the Berneval cliff to its left. At ten o'clock in the morning, several sloops and galiots, or bomb-ketches, made a for-

ward movement, but suddenly there rose so furious a wind from the west that the whole fleet had to anchor in order to avoid being driven ashore.

At this moment the port captains were inspired with an idea which might not only have saved the town from the bombardment with which it was threatened, but also destroyed the enemy's squadron at a blow. They requested the governor, M. de Manneville, to authorize them to requisition the vessels belonging to the fishers of Saint Valery — six leagues from Dieppe — that they might cram them with pitch, coal tar, and other combustible matter, and, having set them alight, launch them upon the English fleet, into which they would be inevitably driven by the wind. By this means, and no matter what the English might do, their ships could not escape destruction. If they remained at anchor, that meant burning; if they cut their moorings, that meant shipwreck.

Unfortunately, the governor knew nothing whatever of naval tactics, and besides, he wanted to distinguish himself under the snug shelter of the walls of the town in his fine hôtel, formerly the house of Ango. The west wind continued to blow, but without bringing compensation for the battle of La Hague to France. At length, on the morning of the 21st, it subsided, and immediately the enemy formed in line.

The first day nothing occurred beyond an unimportant exchange of artillery; on the 22d, this was more momentous, and the English showed their hand. The plan which the Dieppe captains had recommended in vain, the enemy had adopted. The watchers at Pollet remarked behind their galiots a large three-masted ship which remained motionless, in the midst of the evolutions of the fleet. This, in their judgment, could only be a fireship, which the enemy intended to send forward into the port with the rising tide, so as to set fire to all the ships in the harbour. Their opinion was shared by the officers of the defence, who immediately ordered two vessels filled with stone to be sunk between the piers, which were connected by a strong cable chain. They also charged the sailors who served in the advanced batteries to keep that ship under unremitting observation, and to turn all their fire upon it, if it attempted to enter the port.

The Dieppe men were not mistaken. The three-masted vessel was a fireship, but a fireship of a perfected kind, an infernal machine such as never before had existed. It was a new vessel, in the form of a galiot, of one hundred and twenty tons. The bottom of the hold was filled with sand. In the first deck there were twenty thousand weights of powder with a foot deep of stones and mortar on the top. In the third there were all sorts of contrivances. Old

THE FIRE-SHIP.

guns, huge stones, and other hard and heavy substances were piled upon the floor, and lastly, a vertical tube filled with powder, with holes opposite to each deck, passed down through the whole structure, with a fuse at the top, of the length required for the time it would take this floating stake to reach the port. There was powder in the terrible machine sufficient to blow up the entire town.

The evening having come, Admiral Berkeley, who commanded the English fleet, gave the signal for bombardment by a bouquet of fireworks. The projectiles described their deadly parabola in the air. Flames from the unfortunate town reddened the sky. Suddenly, towards midnight, a cry of terror was raised upon the beach. The fireship, blazing to the water's edge, a true device and imp of Satan, its very masts red, was advancing, under full sail, towards the entrance of the port. The hell-ship was but fifty feet off, when, riddled with balls fired pointblank, it suddenly reeled, sank, and at the same moment blew up with a report which was heard so far off as Rouen.

The terrified city was covered with iron and stone fragments, and the burning houses fell in, so that soon there was nothing but an enormous fiery furnace belching forth great masses of flame and volumes of smoke. The great buildings, the fine hôtels of the wealthy citizens, the palace of Ango — called *La Pensée* from the name of the vessel in which the

fortune and the fame of the celebrated ship owner had their origin — were all set on fire. And that nothing should escape, the bombardment was kept up for three days, continuous, correct, and truly Britannic, sending fire where it was wanting, and rekindling the centres where it appeared to be slackening its ravages.

As a crowning misfortune, all the élite of the population being actively engaged on the outside of the fortifications, the keeping of the town fell to the share of the dregs of the people, supplemented by the refugees who had flocked inside the walls from the country, at the first threat of the landing of the enemy.

This unoccupied crowd, by no means naturally brave, and totally indifferent to the most elementary principles of property, applied itself at once to pillage. Then, when the conflagration broke out, numbers of these people broke into the cellars, and one of the most formidable orgies which has ever been recorded in history began.

Before long, the Bretagne regiment joined in the riot. Leaving the ramparts inaccessible, and the posterns carefully closed, thus barring out the Dieppe men from their homes, the soldiers pervaded the town, stopping before all the cellars. Many of them found death there, less glorious than on a bastion, but nothing arrested them.

Drink ! Drink ! had become the general cry ; and so much was drank that the fires sputtered out in the pools of wine. According to a statement which was published shortly afterwards, the number of the inhabitants killed in the streets did not exceed fifty, while more than two hundred corpses were discovered in the cellars of the houses. These ghastly remains were found in the various postures in which death had surprised the men, and even standing upright. They were completely calcined, and, when touched, crumbled into dust. At the Château, also, orgy reigned, but it was decent and less dangerous. The governor, M. de Manneville, who had retired to the shelter of its walls at the firing of the first cannon, amused the Court by his comic history of the events of the siege.

"Our cook," wrote one of his officers, "is so much afraid of being shattered to pieces in his kitchen, because bombs are aimed at the smoke, that he had to be tied to the spot to force him to go on with his task of supplying the governor's table. The governor and his company laughed much, and he diverted the Court by telling this in his letters on the attack and the defence."

So then, the patriot-citizens, placed outside the walls, exposed to the deadly hail of shot, freely offering their lives, glancing backwards upon their burning houses, listening to the surging sound, like

Satan's laugh, of the Saturnalia which was completing their ruin and devouring all that was dear to them, were rewarded by the cruel disdain of the fine folks holding another orgy, high upon the cliff, one more ignoble far than the debauch of the soldiers, the pillagers, the ragamuffins, the lowest scum of the populace in the town.

Dieppe ceased to exist. All was destroyed in the terrible disaster. The house of the Ango family, a masterpiece of the Renaissance, which was preferred to any of his palaces by Francis the First, was reduced to a cinder heap. Of the stately "Manor" of the archbishops of Rouen, with its storehouses of grain, there remained only the blackened walls with strange points and spikes, like grotesque rock-peaks in an infernal landscape. The sumptuous dwellings of the rich Dieppe ship owners were razed to the ground; and, worse than all, the admiralty, that precious guardian of the fame and glory of the great Norman seaport, was entirely destroyed. The admiralty disappeared, and not the trace of a date, a fact, an episode, was left amid its ruin.

Thus vanished in black smoke and blinding ashes the written proof of an expedition, which, this circumstance apart, must be regarded as the most glorious of all from the double point of view of the history of the world and the moral satisfaction of our country.

Immediately after the triumphal return of Christopher Columbus to Spain, the people of Dieppe claimed the priority in the discovery that filled Europe with astonishment and admiration for their own countryman. Their voices were lost in the exulting pæans of praise that greeted the fortunate protégé of Ferdinand and Isabella, and found no echo.

The people of Dieppe had, nevertheless, a hundred good reasons to advance in support of their claim. One only of these ought to have sufficed to resolve every doubt, and that one we are about to submit to our readers as a supreme and final argument.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SPANISH LIEUTENANT.

Christopher Columbus at the Monastery of Robida. — He has several interviews with Vincent Pinçon, the former Lieutenant of Jehan Cousin. — Pinçon directs the expedition. — He has Brazil in view. — Hesitation on board. — The triumph of Christopher Columbus.

On his arrival at Dieppe, where he was received with the pomp and the honours already described, Jehan Cousin proceeded at once to bring the conduct of the Spaniard, Vincent Pinçon, to the knowledge of the Council of the Hotel de Ville, which had at that time naval jurisdiction. The magistrates regarded the Spaniard's bloody deeds with the utmost indignation, recognizing that he had not only compromised their honour as citizens, but injured their commercial interests. They took the evidence of the subaltern officers and the sailors, and, all the facts having been established, judgment was given as follows : "Vincent Pinçon having been convicted of departing from the principles of subordination, good faith, and gentleness, necessary to the prosperity of navigation and commerce, is no longer

worthy to serve as officer on any ship of the port of Dieppe." In other words, he was struck off the roll of the staff of the place, and black-marked by the fact, as regarded the ship owners of other maritime towns, between whom and their colleagues of Dieppe *esprit de corps* and professional solidarity existed. In fact, this judgment dismissed him in disgrace from the French fleets at the moment when they were preparing to mingle their colours with those of the most tried fleets of old Europe.

Pinçon left Dieppe, furious at this pronouncement, and full of menace. He had his vengeance ready to his hand. That proud city which repulsed him should repent it of its scorn. He would rob it of the glory of its discovery; he would tear the aureole from the brow of Jehan Cousin; the benefit of the Admiral's expedition should be given to Spain. It was, however, indispensable to the working out of this gigantic plan that he should find an admiral whose prestige and sea-lore equalled those of the great Dieppe navigator.

When he had discovered such an one, he would guide him by his (Pinçon's) memories, by the fruit of his observations, the confidential instructions which had been imparted to him; and then they would once more find the river, vast as a sea, and the country which had dazzled him by the splendour of its aspect and the wealth of its products.

Pinçon, full of this idea, sailed, with a favourable wind, on a borrowed bark, for the coast of Spain, and landed at Palos, where his brothers were ship owners.

Now, in those days there lived in the convent of La Robida, in the vicinity of Palos, a man, already of middle age, who was regarded as a dreamer with a monomania.

He desired, it was said, to attempt "the unknown dark sea," to "cross the Atlantic, where Fable had placed the sojourn of the dead, and to reach the East by the West."

The aim of Christopher Columbus — for the illustrious Genoese is in question here — was not then to discover an "unpublished" continent; he was seeking a passage to go "to Cathay by the Atlantic Ocean" (le Ponant), that is to say, to China by the West, with the land of Cipango as the point of landing. Cipango was the name that Marco Polo gave to Japan. That idea, let us at once observe, was not his own. It was, indeed, very widespread, and constituted almost an axiom in the world of *savants* and navigators.

Some there were who went farther, and believed in an intermediary continent. They were inspired with that idea by the Jews, who had trading establishments in the far regions of China and at the Court of the Mongol dynasties, called Cathay or

Kathaï, and, therefore, could not be ignorant of the existence of another world besides Asia, since the States of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane bordered upon Behring's Strait.

Columbus was not one of these. He had fed his fancy upon the ancient authors, who had divined that "the merry world was round," and he believed, with Aristotle, that the sea washed, not only the shores outside of the Pillars of Hercules, but also the neighbouring coasts of India. Strabo, Seneca, and Plutarch had confirmed him in his faith. Albertus-Magnus, Roger Bacon, and especially Cardinal Pierre d' Ailly, who had been informed by the Holy See of the relations of the Court of Rome with Vinland, came afterwards, and lastly, the labours of Martin Bohain and those of Toscanelli, of Florence, his contemporaries, had removed his last lingering doubts.

When he found himself in the presence of King John the Second, of Portugal, to whom he had resorted for the realization of his plan, Columbus was not a little surprised to find in His Majesty an ardent advocate of transatlantic navigation. Alphonsus the Fifth had, in fact, commissioned Toscanelli, long before, to furnish him with detailed information respecting the way to India by the West, and Toscanelli had forwarded to him a long letter, accompanied by a map which he had made for the benefit of

navigators desirous of reaching, by way of the sea, "The City of Heaven," situated in the province of the Mango, near Cathay, from whence it would be easy for them to proceed to the country "where spices grow."

This document was precious; unfortunately, it could not be of use to the Portuguese kings, the Pope having delimited the area of action of Spain and Portugal, respectively, granting the West to the former and the East to the latter.

John the Second was, therefore, unable to accept the propositions of Columbus, notwithstanding his urgency; and it was very base on the part of the latter to allege, subsequently, that the king wanted to take all the profit of his projects for himself alone, and to set him, Columbus, aside. He must have been expelled from that hospitable Court for some misdemeanour; for a letter of John the Second, found a short time ago, assures him that he should not be molested by "justice," if he returned to the country which he had left four years previously.

Meanwhile, it is certain that Christopher Columbus had acquired a knowledge of the work done by Toscanelli, with whom he placed himself in direct relations after his departure from Portugal. First of all, he went to Genoa, where he received an explicit refusal; then he settled down for some time at Porto Santo, a recently discovered island in mid-

ocean, governed by a certain Pedro Correa, who had married the sister-in-law of Columbus.

Correa shewed him a piece of wood, curiously carved, which he had picked up on the beach in a strong west wind. In addition to this, Columbus had resided for some time at the Fortunate Isles, whose inhabitants frequently beheld, in mirage, an island in the same direction; and from these phenomena, as well as from his reading and his reflections, he was strengthened in his conviction that the Atlantic Ocean led to the Indies. Thus, being sure of success, he summoned up all his energies, and, supported by his former exploits as corsair and explorer, — for he had "used the sea" since his fifteenth year, — he betook himself to Spain, where he reckoned upon getting the assistance necessary for his expedition. Long had he strayed from palace to palace, and from cabinet to chancery, before his wanderings came to an end; and one day he halted, disappointed, discouraged, weary of existence, poverty-stricken, and hungry, with ever-waning trust in his star, before the gates of the convent of Santa Maria de la Robida.

Who could have told him then, that precisely from that moment the most dazzling adventure that ever the mind of man conceived was to date? The prior of this peaceful retreat, Juan Perez de Marchena, took an interest in his project; in this he was con-

firmed by Garcia Fernandez, a doctor of medicine belonging to Palos, who was very well informed on the matter, and especially by the pilot, Pedro de Velasco, who had encountered, in the course of his voyages, a very calm sea at the north of Ireland, which had seemed to him like a tranquil valley separating two continents. But the mind of the good abbé was completely enlightened when he had been admitted as a third to the conversations which Columbus frequently held with an unknown person who came to confer with him and always remained for several hours.

This mysterious personage answered to the name of Vincent Pinzon. He described himself as a seaman, boasted of his great experience of the sea, and, for the moment, was trading with his brothers, old sailors like himself, in rigging and munitions for the Andalusian ships.

The elder of the two brothers, Martin Alonzo, was occasionally present at these conferences. What passed at them? What was said? History has not a word to tell us on this subject. However, it is certain that after one of these mysterious meetings, at which Martin Alonzo, who managed the finances of the house of Pinzon Brothers, had announced his intention of taking good share of the expenses of the expedition for his own part, — this he did afterwards — that Juan Perez, in order to procure the royal

patronage for Columbus, entrusted the interests of the latter to his colleague, Fernando de Talavera, who was the Queen's confessor, and prior of the convent of El Prado.

It is well known that the prior did not respond to the confidence which his colleague of La Robida had reposed in him and his power. It was the cardinal-archbishop of Toledo, Pedro Gonzalès de Mendoza, who presented Columbus at Court. Then came difficulties of all sorts: the openly declared hostility of the Council of Salamanca; the distraction of the king's attention caused by his war of extermination against the Moors; the ill will of all those whom the transatlantic expedition ought to have attracted. But we need not follow the energetic and persevering petitioner through his vicissitudes and his painful disappointments. At length, Columbus triumphed over the difficulties and the opposition he had had to contend with, and his fleet crossed the bar of Saltes, in the offing of the town of Huelva, in Andalusia, sailing for the unknown.

On the first day, the fleet made fifteen leagues before sunset; then it sailed in the direction of the Canaries, for repairs of damage to the flagship, and afterwards cast anchor before Gomara. There, the belief of Columbus in the existence of an unknown country to the west was confirmed by the inhabitants, and, finally, the three caravels, hoisting the

flag of Castille, headed for the famous Japanese coast.

The *Nina*, commanded by Vincent Yanez Pinzon, led the way; the *Pinta*, with Martin Alonzo, his brother, Francisque Martin, acting as pilot, followed closely, and the *Santa Maria*, carrying Christopher Columbus himself, came last, sailing in the track of the other two ships.

The admiral followed the course taken by the *Nina*, with keen anxiety. According to his calculations, Vincent Pinzon was not on the right course; he was keeping on towards the southwest, whereas the Asiatic coast was to be found on the northeast. He made signal after signal to check the speed of his lieutenant, but Pinzon made believe that he did not perceive them. Then Columbus had a boat lowered and went on board the *Nina*.

The admiral wore a frowning aspect, his brow was contracted, and he cast an angry glance on Vincent Pinzon. The two men retired to a cabin, and presently their voices were heard, loud in dispute. The lieutenant's tones predominated, and conveyed his firm determination not to yield. But the admiral was absolute master of his fleet; he might, if he so pleased, imprison his officers and put them in irons as well as his soldiers and sailors. Pinzon reflected on this fact, and bowed low.

"Let your good pleasure be done, Don Cristofal,"

said he, as he escorted the admiral to the gangway. "I will go whither you command me to go. It may be that we shall arrive at a continent. As for me, I thought to lead you to a fairer land than any you have met with. I have seen that country, and the sight dazzles me still."

"Possibly," was the cold reply of Columbus; "we shall have plenty of time, later on, to visit this paradise. In the meantime, my plan is well laid out in my mind, and from this moment, I, myself, lead the expedition."

Vincent Pinzon saluted, and when the admiral had left the *Nina*, he was heard to mutter:

"Is it, then, written that I shall be always forced to obey?"

After this he became absorbed in meditation, now walking the deck with quick strides, anon coming to a sudden stop, and striking his brow. Occasionally he spoke aloud, mentioning names which none of those present had ever heard. At length he ordered a boat and boarded the *Pinta*, where he held a colloquy with his brothers. He then returned to his ship in a state of manifest depression. No doubt, Martin Alonzo Pinzon, who was the treasurer of the expedition, had advised him not to break with the admiral, at least for the present.

In the meantime, the order to "'bout ship" had been given on the *Santa Maria*, and the other two

caravels also changed their course, with regret. Then began the long lapse of days, which were full of gloom at first and afterwards of despondency. The fleet constantly encountered tracts of floating weed, and birds in great numbers wheeled and dipped about the ships; but land was nowhere to be descried.

At one moment, however, there was a great stir among the crews of the *Santa Maria* and the *Pinta*. A round of musketry from the *Nina* was the cause. Vincent Pinzon thought he had discerned the blue line of a continent on the horizon. He was mistaken, unless, indeed, his only object in making the assertion was to attract the attention of Christopher Columbus.

And, in fact, after a short time, and when his error, whether pretended or true, had been recognized, the admiral summoned him and his brother, Martin Alonzo, to the flagship. A conference between the three commanders took place. It was very long and very quietly conducted. The journal of Columbus records that Pinzon again dwelt upon the necessity of bearing farther to the south than was acceptable to the admiral, who, making always for Cipango, which he placed more to the north, was drawing away from the rumb, under which his lieutenant had navigated four years previously, to touch an unknown coast.

But Columbus was obstinate. In vain did his mind, disturbed by the strong conviction of Vincent Pinzon, misgive him; in vain did the lurking fear that he was on the wrong track assail him. He would not give in; his utmost concession was a slight inclination to the south, at a small angle, and the course of the ships was not sensibly changed.

Nevertheless, the admiral visited the *Nina* every day, and invariably he asked her commander whether they were making good way. Invariably, also, Vincent Pinzon answered him in the negative, adding that, until the helm had been resolutely put no longer to the southwest, — it was too late, — but to the south, nothing would be accomplished.

At last, after a long conference, brought about by the murmurs and the discontented attitude of the crews, who were tired of such toilsome navigation, and plainly manifested their state of mind, Columbus yielded.

On the following day he summoned a council, in which his officers and his pilots took part. One of the former, Francisque Garcis Vallejo, a principal witness in the investigation to which the first voyage of Columbus gave rise, mentions the following particulars of that memorable consultation. Its date was Oct. 7, 1493.

When it was quite clear that the plan of Vincent Pinzon had prevailed over that of the admiral in the minds of his hearers, Columbus spoke:

"We are," he said, "at a distance of twelve hundred leagues from the coast of Spain, and there is great uneasiness among my company. Some of them propose that we should turn back."

"You will not do that," said the Pinzon brothers, speaking together.

"No," answered Columbus. "We are too far from home, and, no doubt, too near our goal to turn back. I am of opinion that we ought to go on to two thousand leagues, and then, if we do not see land, let us 'bout ship!'"

"What!" said Vincent Pinzon, firmly. "We left Palos yesterday, and does our courage fail us to-day? Forward! God is with us! We shall soon discover land. May God keep us from conceiving the cowardly idea of returning with shame to our country."

These words braced and cheered the hearts of all. The crews, who were informed of what had passed, took an oath that they would not allow themselves to be discouraged any more, and the fleet went on its course as valiantly as when it crossed the bar of Saltes.

The rest is too well known to need recapitulation. On the night of the 11th of October, the cry of *Land!* was raised by the *Pinta*, which for some time had been leading, owing to her superior speed.

Martin Alonzo Pinzon had promised his brother

that the honours of the expedition should be theirs. It was from his ship that the signal of victory was given, and on his ship, also, the first *Te Deum* was chanted on the confines of the New World.

This was something worth, but the Pinzon brothers wanted the crowning glory of the acknowledgment and applause of all Europe. The obstinacy of Columbus had caused them to miss the official discovery of the Maragnon, of which they would have taken all the credit; it was, therefore, just that they should get the benefit of success that was in fact their achievement, to a certain extent; for, if Columbus had adhered to his idea he would have passed above the Lucayas, and he would have fared through currents and contrary winds towards Georgia or the Carolinas. He would certainly not have arrived there, because the crews, with the Pinzons at their head, would have mutinied and deposed him, or thrown him into the sea.

In the general enthusiasm the three brothers from Palos had to defer their self-exaltation until a more propitious opportunity. The *Nina* was inseparable from the *Santa Maria*, and besides, after the loss of his caravel on the coast of St. Thomas's Island, Christopher Columbus went on board Vincent Pinzon's ship.

Once, at Cuba, the *Pinta* stole away. The admiral had been much annoyed by this desertion; but it did

not astonish him. He merely remarked: "Pinzon has said and done many other things to me," and went on his way. But Martin Alonzo and his brother, the pilot, were not first-rate seamen; they had neither the intuition of the explorers, their boldness, nor their experience of the sea, and, not knowing how to get back to Europe, they tacked, and ran out the coast, and finally were very glad to rejoin Columbus, who took them with him on his departure.

The voyage was made in due order until the diminished fleet reached the Azores, when the *Pinta* again stole away during a storm, and this time Martin Alonzo did succeed in being the first to land in Spain. Events, however, failed to fulfil his expectations. He had landed on the coast of Galicia, and learning that the Court was at Barcelona he proceeded by land to that city, in order to be the first to give the good news to the king and queen, and to derive the profit of it; but the sovereigns refused to receive him.

The Pinzons were unlucky folk. Queen Isabella had been even beforehand with her husband in showing favour to Christopher Columbus and his projects, and a courier had just arrived with information for Their Majesties of the arrival of the *Nina* at Palos.

The admiral was immediately summoned to Catalonia, and Martin Alonzo had the mortification of witnessing his triumph. His brother Vincent was

still more to be pitied, having the consciousness that he had been the first to touch the transatlantic continent.

The former lieutenant of Jehan Cousin must have been moved to some strange reflections upon the vicissitudes of things here below, by the sight of the crowd, in a delirium of delight, showering flowers on Columbus at his entry into Barcelona, and by the sound of the welcoming cannon and the bells pealing in triumph. An insignificant figure in a spectacle of which he might have been, indeed, in strict justice ought to have been, the hero, he must have recognized the hand of Heaven in such a trial inflicted upon him in expiation of his conduct on board the Dieppe ship, and his cowardly aggression on the coast of Angola.

But we are lending him fine sentiments, such as Vincent Pinzon was not capable of entertaining. Accordingly, he made no delay in beginning his malpractices over again, and presently he had to gather the sometimes bitter fruit of them.

EPILOGUE.

The discovery of the New World had not greatly enriched the Pinzon brothers. In recompense of their services Columbus, no doubt, treated them with his customary ingratitude. One thing is certain, they had no share in his subsequent expeditions. Having shared the toil, they were denied the honour; that is to say, they had helped to discover San Salvador, Conception, Cuba, and Saint Domingo, but were not permitted to tread the virgin soil of Dominica and Porto Rico, or, later still, to visit the numerous islands of the tropical archipelago, to which the ambition of the Lord High Admiral of the Spanish fleets was limited.

It is also known that the Pinzon brothers, having returned to Palos, carried on their trade in rigging and provisions for the Andalusian ships. In vain did Vincent Pinzon make repeated appeals for funds to carry out his plan. He, as well as all the companions of Columbus, had admired the beauty and the wealth of the isles on which they had landed, but he knew that the continent lying farther south possessed riches of far greater price. The great river

attracted him, as the loadstone attracts gold. He talked of it, incessantly, and began to be taken for a monomaniac, like Christopher Columbus, before his expedition, with the important difference that he did not meet with a John the Second, a Perez de Marchena, or a Gonzalez de Mendoza, still less a Ferdinand and an Isabella, to enable him to rediscover the rumb which led to the land of wonders.

However, at the end of seven years of constant effort and supplication, he succeeded in freighting a ship, on which he entrusted himself to the wide ocean, avoiding the route adopted by the Spanish and Portuguese fleets to gain the zone in which they traded, but keeping his helm to the south-west, according to his principle; and, in sober fact, he did come to his Dolphin plateau, and it led him to Cape Saint-Augustine, which he named "The Cape of Consolation," and from whence he sailed along the coast until he arrived, with but little difficulty, at the estuary of the Maragnon. He ascended the river beyond the point which Jehan Cousin had reached, and established himself in a place where the inhabitants wore ornaments of solid gold. These gewgaws excited his cupidity. From whence did these natives procure this precious metal? He questioned them by signs, and the people pointed to the north, indicating, at the same time, that there was much gold in that direction.

Vincent Pinzon was highly pleased to learn this, but the injustice and rapacity of his nature immediately suggested that he would do well to lay hands on the gold which chance had placed in his way, before he went in search of more distant treasure. He offered the usual barter, toy-bells and glass beads, but, contrary to his expectations, the men and women of this singular country set store by their jewels, and also by their feathers and their arms, refusing to part with them at any price. Pinzon then resorted to threats, and, as these, too, failed to produce any result, he bethought him of Angola, and fired his blunderbuss at a chief, whom he missed. Instantly, the whole band of natives fled, making for the primitive forest, which began at a few feet from the river, and he never again saw them.

On the other hand, the alarm had been given, and each time that the ship approached the bank, a shower of well-aimed arrows fell upon the crew. Before long a considerable number of men had lost their lives. Then there arose murmuring and discontent on board; the sailors mutinied, and Pinzon, whom they agreed to maroon on the first islet they should meet, was forced to quit the inhospitable river to which he had brought such fair hopes, leaving the place to the Dieppe men, who had been carrying on a trade with this rich country since the time of Jehan Cousin.

The Dieppe men did not trouble themselves about the gold the natives wore on their necks, arms, and legs, and had no occasion to bring the blunderbuss into action. The dye-wood (*brésillet*) was sufficient for them, and so pleased were they with the good store they found, that they gave the name of Brésil (Brazil) to the country that produced it.

When Alvarez Cabral, the Portuguese, presented himself in these regions — which he claimed to have discovered — in 1500, he found Frenchmen there. The fact is proved by some recent indications, France had also preceeded Portugal in Guiana, but this is not matter for us.

Vincent Pinzon, suffice it to say, rediscovered the Maragnon. We may add that he voyaged in Guiana and was named "royal pilot" in Spain. He accompanied Vespucius Americanus in several of his explorations, and, no doubt, behaved very ill on these occasions, for, when he returned to Seville, after a long absence, he was brought to trial, and even sentenced to the galleys. The king pardoned him on the condition that he should navigate no more.

He was done for in France, he was done for in Spain, he withdrew to his tent and consoled himself by writing the narrative of his voyages.

This is known to be the case; but under what dust, in what cloister in Spain, the land of cloisters and of dust, do these precious manuscripts repose?

Truly, all these episodes were attended by fatality. The holy house which held or holds them shares the destiny of the admiralty of Dieppe. The one was burned, the other is unknown.

We may be sure that in those Memoirs of Vincent Pinzon, Jehan Cousin was very roughly handled. But, out of enmity to the Dieppe men who had struck him off their roll, and if only to ascribe the merit of the adventure to himself, he would have related his first voyage to America — before America was "discovered."

Likewise, his envy of Columbus, whom he had, in fact, guided in his navigation, although he had failed to convince him, must certainly have prevented him from concealing his rights of priority over the trans-atlantic lands.

Lastly, he would, assuredly, have indulged in re-crimination against his own countrymen, of whom he had to complain, and taunted them freely with having failed to arrive first on American ground.

We may, then, assert with full certainty, that if these Memoirs, which are known to exist, could be found, it would be proved that our fellow countryman, Jehan Cousin, was, indeed, the precursor of Christopher Columbus in America.

Those masters in geography, and especially in historical geography, Estancelin, Pierre Margry, Paul Gaffarel, as well as many others, entertained no doubt of his expedition.

When the discoveries of Columbus, his rivals, and his successors, and also those of Vasco de Gama, became known in Europe, the men of Dieppe, breaking through their habits of dissimulation, eagerly advanced the claims of their famous fellow countryman, who, according to them, and very certainly, had landed in America four years before Christopher Columbus, and doubled the African point (Cape of Good Hope) eleven years before Vasco de Gama. (Nothing was known then of Leif Erikson, his kinsmen, Hervador and Sinclair). Their protest and complaint were, however, lost in the jubilation of the Spanish and Portuguese expeditions. And then, Dieppe was always Dieppe, that is to say, shifty and mysterious.

A little less than a century after the discovery of the New World, in 1582, La Popelinière wrote concerning Cousin :

"Our Frenchman, ill-advised, had neither the wit nor the discretion to take fitting public measures for the assurance of his designs, as lofty, as generous as those of the others ; as though it were not enough to have committed a like fault touching the discoveries made by our people in Africa, where the Norman vessels traded before the Portuguese had ever touched the coast."

Let us sum up the case!

Yes, assuredly, the great Genoese will remain the true, undisputed pioneer of the transatlantic regions,

because it was he who first set sail upon the ocean with the profound conviction, based on reasoning and science, that he was going to a continent, destined, to his mind, to complete the circle of the terrestrial globe.

But the grave and manly face of Jehan Cousin, illumined by the spirit of discovery based upon calculations no less patient, would not ill become the monuments which the two worlds go on erecting to the exclusive honour of Christopher Columbus, with unreflecting enthusiasm.

Leif, the Lucky, Bjorn Herwolfson, and all the valiant Norsemen whom we have cited, should also find their places there; they have "their papers in order," none can contest their anterior discovery of American territory, or, moreover, that they inhabited and colonized it.

Prior to the opening of the World's Fair at Chicago, one of the war-ships of the Navy of the United States of America went, in great pomp, to Europe, to take delivery of the Scandinavian *sagas*, to the number of twenty-four, comprised in the Flattey-Book, a parchment folio belonging to the Copenhagen Museum, and which was completed *five hundred years before the first expedition of Christopher Columbus.*

This precious manuscript, the object of the greatest honours that have ever been rendered to

an historical utterance of the human mind, was to have held the foremost place at the World's Fair ; but the Danish Government very rightly refused to part with these invaluable documents. All it thought fit to do was to send a *drakar*, built on the model of the ancient vessels of the Vikings, and this was placed alongside the caravels that represented the fleet of Christopher Columbus.

The Americans are, then, the first to accept this long ignored truth, that nine centuries ago their continent was visited by Europeans.

Europe, itself, will share that conviction hereafter ; it is a matter of time.

And then we shall erect statues in France to those who really discovered America.

THE END.

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